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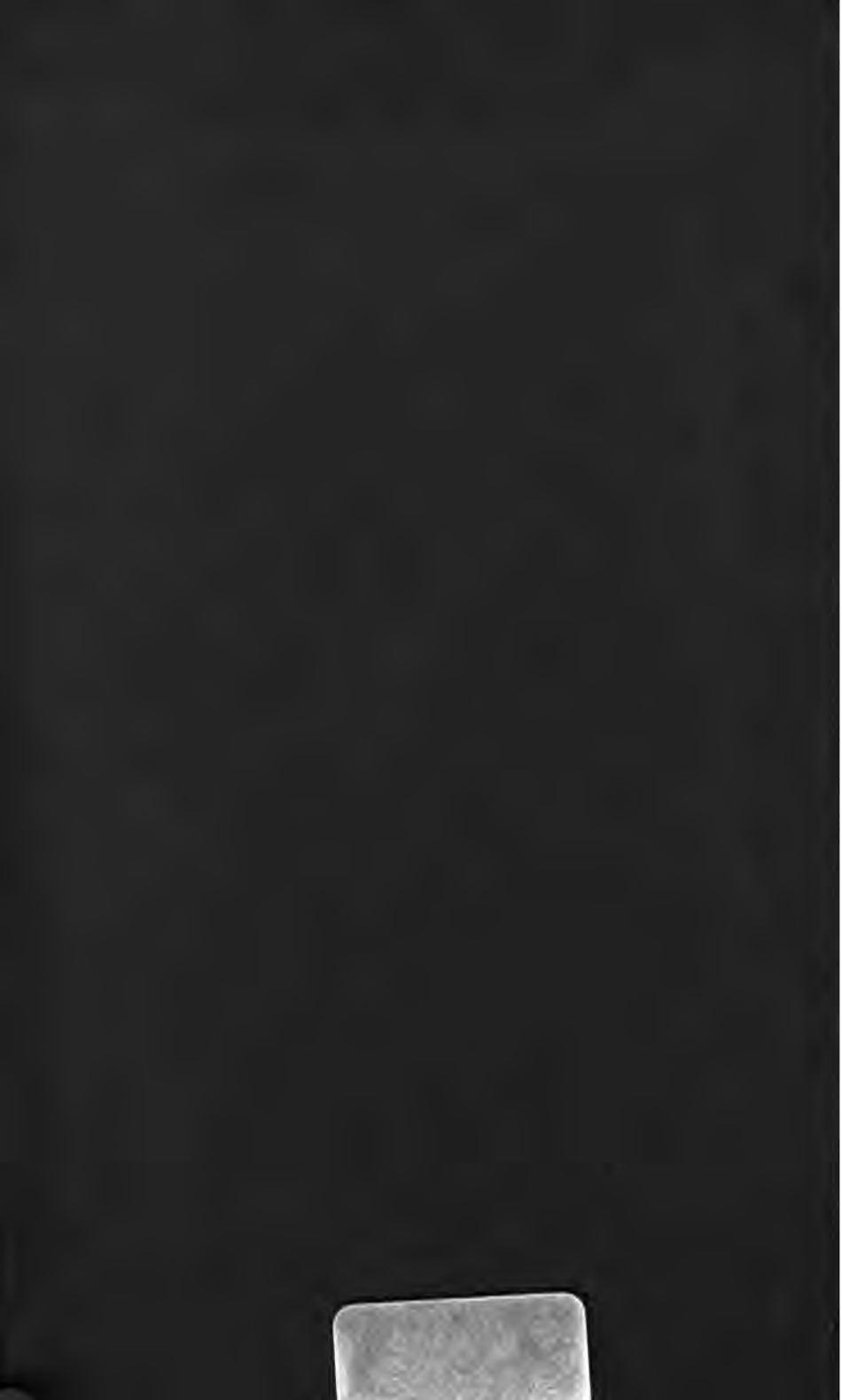

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NOVELS AND ROMANCES

OF

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY

VOL. VI.

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

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PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

"If my readers should at any time remark that I am particularly dull, they may be assured there is a design under it."—*British Essayist.*

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

CHAP. I.

——— On fair ground
I could beat forty of them.
Coriolanus.

It doubtless occurred to many that were present at the trial we have described, that it was managed in a singular manner, and that the quarrel, which had the appearance of having taken place between the Court and the Crown Counsel, might proceed from some private understanding betwixt them, the object of which was the miscarriage of the accusation. Yet though such underhand dealing was much suspected, the greater part of the audience, being well educated and intelligent, had already suspected the bubble of the Popish Plot, and were glad to see that accusations, founded on what had already cost so much blood, could be evaded in any

way. But the crowd, who waited in the Court of Requests, and in the hall, and without doors, viewed in a very different light the combination, as they interpreted it, between the Judge and the Attorney-General, for the escape of the prisoners.

Oates, whom less provocation than he had that day received often induced to behave like one frantic with passion, threw himself amongst the crowd, and repeated till he was hoarse, "Theay are stoifling the Plaat!—theay are straangling the Plaat! —My Laard Justice and Maaster Attarney are in league to secure the escape of the plaaters and Paapists!"

"It is the device of the Papist whore of Portsmouth," said one.

"Of old Rowley himself," said another.

"If he could be murdered by himself, why hang those that would hinder it?" said a fourth.

"He should be tried," said another, "for conspiring his own death, and hanged *in terrorem*."

In the meanwhile, Sir Geoffrey, his son, and their little companion, left the hall, intending to go to Lady Peveril's lodgings, which had been removed to Fleet Street. She had been relieved from considerable inconvenience, as Sir Geoffrey gave Julian hastily to understand, by an angel, in the shape of a young friend, and she now expected them doubtless with impatience. Humanity, and some indistinct idea of having unintentionally hurt the feel-

ings of the poor dwarf, induced the honest Cavalier to ask this unprotected being to go with them. "He knew Lady Peveril's lodgings were but small," he said; "but it would be strange, if there was not some cupboard large enough to accommodate the little gentleman."

The dwarf registered this well-meant remark in his mind, to be the subject of a proper explanation, along with the unhappy reminiscence of the trencher-hornpipe, whenever time should permit an argument of such nicety.

And thus they sallied from the hall, attracting general observation, both from the circumstances in which they had stood so lately, and from their resemblance, as a wag of the Inner Temple expressed it, to the three degrees of comparison, Large, Lesser, Least. But they had not passed far along the street, when Julian perceived, that more malevolent passions than mere curiosity began to actuate the crowd, which followed, and, as it were, dogged their motions.

"There go the Papist cut-throats, tantivy for Rome!" said one fellow.

"Tantivy to Whitehall, you mean!" said another.

"Ah! the blood-thirsty villains!" cried a woman: "Shame, one of them should be suffered to live, after poor Sir Edmundsbury's cruel murder."

"Out upon the mealy-mouthed jury, that turn-

ed out the bloodhounds on an innocent town!" cried another.

In short, the tumult thickened, and the word began to pass among the more desperate, "Lamb them, lads; lamb them!"—a cant phrase of the time, derived from the fate of Dr Lambe, an astrologer and quack, who was knocked on the head by the rabble in Charles the First's time.

Julian began to be much alarmed at these symptoms of violence, and regretted that they had not gone down to the city by water. It was now too late to think of that mode of retreating, and he therefore requested his father in a whisper to walk steadily forward towards Charing Cross, taking no notice of the insults which might be cast upon them, while the steadiness of their pace and appearance might prevent the rabble from resorting to actual violence. The execution of this prudent resolution was prevented after they had passed the palace, by the hasty disposition of the elder Sir Geoffrey, and the no less choleric temper of Galfridus Minimus, who had a soul which spurned all odds, as well of numbers as of size.

"Now a murrain take the knaves, with their hollowing and whooping," said the larger knight; "by this day, if I could but light on a weapon, I would cudgel reason and loyalty into some of their carcases!"

"And I also," said the dwarf, who was toiling

to keep up with the longer strides of his companions, and therefore spoke in a very phthisical tone, "I also will cudgel the plebeian knaves beyond measure—he!—hem!"

Among the crowd who thronged around them, impeded, and did all but assault them, was a mischievous shoemaker's apprentice, who, hearing this unlucky vaunt of the valorous dwarf, repaid it by flapping him on the head with a boot which he was carrying home to the owner, so as to knock the little gentleman's hat over his eyes. The dwarf, thus rendered unable to discover the urchin that had given him the offence, flew with instinctive ambition against the biggest fellow in the crowd, who received the onset with a kick on the stomach, which made the poor little champion reel back to his companions. They were now assaulted on all sides; but fortune, complying with the wish of Sir Geoffrey the larger, ordained that the scuffle should happen near the booth of a cutler, from amongst whose wares, as they stood exposed to the public, Sir Geoffrey Peveril snatched a broad-sword, which he brandished with the formidable address of one who had for many a day been in the familiar practice of using such a weapon. Julian, while at the same time he called loudly for a peace officer, and reminded the assailants that they were attacking inoffensive passengers, saw nothing better for it than to

imitate his father's example, and seized also one of the weapons thus opportunely offered.

When they displayed these demonstrations of defence, the rush which the rabble at first made towards them was so great as to throw down the unfortunate dwarf, who would have been trampled to death in the scuffle, had not his stout old namesake cleared the rascal crowd from about him with a few flourishes of his weapon, and seizing on the fallen champion, put him out of danger, (except from missiles) by suddenly placing him on the bulk-head, that is to say, the flat wooden roof of the cutler's projecting booth. From the rusty ironware which was displayed there, the dwarf instantly snatched an old rapier and target, and, covering himself with the one, stood making passes with the other, at the faces and eyes of the people in the street; so much delighted with his post of vantage, that he called loudly to his friends who were skirmishing with the rioters on more equal terms as to position, to lose no time in putting themselves under his protection. But far from being in a situation to need his assistance, the father and son might easily have extricated themselves from the rabble by their own exertions, could they have thought of leaving the mannikin in the forlorn situation, in which, to every eye but his own, he stood like a diminutive puppet, set out with sword and target as a fencing-master's sign.

Stones and sticks begau now to fly very thick, and the crowd, notwithstanding the exertions of the Peverils to disperse them with as little harm as possible, seemed determined on mischief, when some gentlemen who had been at the trial, understanding that the prisoners who had been just acquitted were in danger of being murdered by the populace, drew their swords, and made forward to effect their rescue, which was completed by a small party of the King's Life Guards, who had been dispatched from their ordinary post of alarm, upon intelligence of what was passing. When this unexpected reinforcement arrived, the old jolly Knight at once recognized, amidst the cries of those who then entered upon action, some of the sounds which had animated his more active years.

"Where be these cuckoldy Roundheads," cried some.—"Down with the sneaking knaves!" cried others.—"The King and his friends, and the devil a one else!" exclaimed a third set, with more oaths and d—n mees than, in the present more correct age, it is necessary to commit to paper.

The old soldier, pricking up his ears like an ancient hunter at the cry of the hounds, would gladly have scoured the Strand, with the charitable purpose, now he saw himself so well supported, of knocking the London knaves, who had insulted him, into twiggen bottles; but he was withheld by the prudence of Julian, who, though himself

extremely irritated by the unprovoked ill usage which they had received, saw himself in a situation in which it was necessary to exercise more caution than vengeance. He prayed and pressed his father to seek some temporary place of retreat from the fury of the populace, while that prudent measure was yet in their power. The subaltern officer who commanded the party of the Life Guards, exhorted the old Cavalier eagerly to the same sage counsel, using, as a spice of compulsion, the name of the King; while Julian strongly urged that of his mother. The old Knight looked at his blade, crimsoned with cross-cuts and slashes which he had given to the most forward of the assailants, with the eye of one not half sufficed.

"I would I had pinked one of the knaves at least—but I know not how it was, when I looked on their broad round English faces, I shunned to use my point, and only sliced the rogues a little."

"But the King's pleasure," said the officer, "is, that no tumult be prosecuted."

"My mother," said Julian, "will die with fright, if the rumour of this scuffle reaches her ere we see her."

"Ay, ay," said the Knight, "the King's Majesty, and my good dame—well, their pleasure be done, that's all I can say—Kings and ladies must be obeyed. But which way to retreat, since retreat we needs must?"

Julian would have been at some loss to advise what course to take, for everybody in the vicinity had shut up their shops, and chained their doors, upon observing the confusion become so formidable. The poor cutler, however, with whose goods they made so free, offered the man asylum on the part of his landlord, whose house served as a rest for his shop, and only intimated gently, he hoped the gentlemen would consider him for the use of his weapons.

Julian was hastily revolving whether they ought, in prudence, to accept this man's invitation, aware, by experience, how many trepans, as they were then termed, were used betwixt two contending factions, each too inveterate to be very scrupulous of the character of fair play to an enemy, when the dwarf, exerting his cracked voice to the uttermost, and shrieking like an exhausted herald, from the exalted station which he still occupied on the bulk-head, exhorted them to accept the offer of the worthy man of the mansion. "He himself," he said, as he reposed himself after the glorious conquest in which he had some share, "had been favoured with a beatific vision, too splendid to be described to common and mere mortal ears, but which had commanded him, in a voice to which his heart had bounded as to a trumpet sound, to take refuge with the worthy person of the house, and cause his friends to do so."

"Vision!" said the Knight of the Peak,—"sound of a trumpet!—the little man is stark mad."

But the cutler, in great haste, intimated to them that their little friend had received an intimation from a gentlewoman of his acquaintance, who spoke to him from the window, while he stood on the bulk-head, that they would find a safe retreat in his landlord's; and, desiring them to attend to two or three deep though distant huzzas, made them aware that the rabble were up still, and would soon be upon them with renewed violence, and increased numbers.

The father and son, therefore, hastily thanked the officer and his party, as well as the other gentlemen who had volunteered in their assistance, lifted little Sir Geoffrey Hudson from the conspicuous post which he had so creditably occupied during the skirmish, and followed the footsteps of the tenant of the booth, who conducted them down a blind alley, and through one or two courts, in case, as he said, any one might have watched where they burrowed, and so into a back-door. This entrance admitted them to a staircase carefully hung with straw mats to exclude damp, from the upper step of which they entered upon a tolerably large withdrawing-room, hung with coarse green serge edged with gilded leather, which the poorer or more economical citizens at that time used instead of tapestry or wainscotting.

Here the poor cutler received from Julian such a gratuity for the loan of the swords, that he generously abandoned the property to the gentlemen who had used them so well; "the rather," he said, "that he saw, by the way they handled their weapons, that they were men of mettle, and tall fellows."

Here the dwarf smiled on him courteously, and bowed, thrusting, at the same time, his hand into his pocket, which, however, he withdrew carelessly, probably because he found he had not the means of making the small donation which he had meditated.

The cutler proceeded to say, as he bowed and was about to withdraw, that he saw there would be merry days yet in Old England, and that Bilboa blades would fetch as good a price as ever. "I remember," he said, "gentlemen, though I was then but a prentice, the demand for weapons in the years forty-one and forty-two; sword-blades were more in demand than tooth-picks, and Old Ironsides, my master, took more for rascally Provant rapiers, than I dare ask now-a-days for a Toledo. But, to be sure, a man's life then rested on the blade he carried; the Cavaliers and Roundheads fought every day at the gates of Whitehall, as it is like, gentlemen, by your good example, they may do again, when I will be enabled to leave my pitiful booth, and open a shop of better quality. I

hope you will recommend me, gentlemen, to your friends. I am always provided with ware which a gentleman may risk his life on."

"Thank you, good friend," said Julian, "I prithee begone. I trust we shall need thy ware no more for some time at least."

The cutler retired, while the dwarf holloed after him down stairs, that he would call on him soon, and equip himself with a longer blade, and one more proper for action; although, he said, the little weapon he had did well enough for a walking-sword, or in a skirmish with such canaille as they had been engaged with.

The cutler returned at this summons, and agreed to pleasure the little man with a weapon more suitable to his magnanimity; then, as if the thought had suddenly occurred to him, he said, "But, gentlemen, it will be but wild work to walk with your naked swords through the Strand, and it can scarce fail to raise the rabble again. If you please, while you repose yourselves here, I can fit the blades with sheaths."

The proposal seemed so reasonable, that Julian and his father gave up their weapons to the friendly cutler, an example which the dwarf followed, after a moment's hesitation, not caring, as he magnificently expressed it, to part so soon with the trusty friend which fortune had but the moment before restored to his hand. The man retired with

the weapons under his arm; and, in shutting the door behind him, they heard him turn the key.

"Did you hear that?" said Sir Geoffrey to his son—"and we are disarmed."

Julian, without reply, examined the door, which was fast secured; and then looked at the casements, which were at a story's height from the ground, and grated besides with iron. "I cannot think," he said, after a moment's pause, "that the fellow means to trepan us; and, in any event, I trust we should have no difficulty in forcing the door, or otherwise making an escape. But, before resorting to such violent measures, I think it is better to give the rabble leisure to disperse, by waiting this man's return with our weapons within a reasonable time, when, if he does not appear, I trust we will find little difficulty in extricating ourselves." As he spoke thus, the hangings were pulled aside, and, from a small door which was concealed behind them, Major Bridgenorth entered the room.

CHAP. II.

He came amongst them like a new-raised spirit,
To speak of dreadful judgments that impend,
And of the wrath to come.

The Reformer.

THE astonishment of Julian at the unexpected apparition of Bridgenorth, was instantly succeeded by apprehension of his father's violence, which he had every reason to believe would break forth against one, whom he himself could not but reverence on account of his own merits, as well as because he was the father of Alice. The appearance of Bridgenorth was not, indeed, such as to awaken resentment. His countenance was calm, his step slow and composed, his eye not without the indication of some deep-seated anxiety, but without any expression either of anger or of triumph. "You are welcome," he said, "Sir Geoffrey Peveril, to the shelter and hospitality of this house; as welcome as you would have been in other days, when we called each other neighbours and friends."

"Odzooks," said the old Cavalier, "and had I known it was thy house, man, I would sooner had

my heart's blood run down the kennel, than my foot should have crossed your threshold—in the way of seeking safety, that is."

"I forgive your inveteracy," said Major Bridgenorth, "on account of your prejudices."

"Keep your forgiveness," answered the Cavalier, "until you are pardoned yourself. By Saint George, I have sworn, if ever I got my heels out of yon rascally prison, whither I was sent much through your means, Master Bridgenorth,—that you should pay the reckoning for my bad lodging.—I will strike no man in his own house; but if you will cause the fellow bring back my weapon, and take a turn in that blind court there below, along with me, you shall soon see what chance a traitor hath with a true man, and a Puritan with Peveril of the Peak."

Bridgenorth smiled with much composure. "When I was younger and more warm-blooded," he replied, "I refused your challenge, Sir Geoffrey; it is not like I should now accept it, when each is within a stride of the grave. I have not spared, and will not spare, my blood, when my country wants it."

"That is when there is any chance of treason against the King," said Sir Geoffrey.

"Nay, my father," said Julian, "let us hear Master Bridgenorth! We have been sheltered in his house; and although we now see him in London, we should remember that he did not appear

against us this day, when perhaps his evidence might have given a fatal turn to our situation."

"You are right, young man," said Bridgenorth; "and it should be some pledge of my sincere good will, that I was this day absent from Westminster, when a few words from my mouth had ended the long line of Peveril of the Peak: It needed but ten minutes to walk to Westminster Hall to have insured your condemnation. But could I have done this, knowing, as I now know, that to thee, Julian Peveril, I owe the extrication of my daughter—of my dearest Alice—the memory of her departed mother—from the snares which hell and profligacy had opened around her?"

"She is, I trust, safe," said Peveril eagerly, and almost forgetting his father's presence; "she is, I trust, safe, and in your own wardship?"

"Not in mine," said the dejected father; "but in that of one in whose protection, next to that of Heaven, I can most fully confide."

"Are you sure—are you very sure of that?" repeated Julian eagerly. "I found her under the charge of one to whom she had been trusted, and who yet——"

"And who yet was the basest of women," answered Bridgenorth; "but he who selected her for the charge was deceived in her character."

"Say rather you were deceived in his; remem-

ber that when we parted at Moultrassie, I warned you of that Ganlesse—that——"

"I know your meaning," said Bridgenorth; "nor did you err in describing him as a worldly-wise man. But he has atoned for his error by recovering Alice from the dangers into which she was plunged when separated from you; and besides, I have not thought meet again to intrust him with the charge that is dearest to me."

"I thank God your eyes are thus far opened!" said Julian.

"This day will open them wide, or close them for ever," answered Bridgenorth.

During this dialogue, which the speakers hurried through without attending to the others who were present, Sir Geoffrey listened with surprise and eagerness, endeavouring to catch something which should render their conversation intelligible; but as he totally failed in gaining any such key to their meaning, he broke in with,—"'Sblood and thunder, Julian, what unprofitable gossip is this? What hast thou to do with this fellow, more than to bastinado him, if you should think it worth while to beat so old a rogue?"

"My dearest father," said Julian, "you know not this gentleman—I am certain you do him injustice. My own obligations to him are many; and I am sure when you come to know them——"

"I hope I shall die ere that moment come," said

Sir Geoffrey; and continued with increasing violence, "I hope in the mercy of Heaven, that I will be in the grave of my ancestors, ere I learn that my son—my only son—the last hope of my ancient house—the last remnant of the name of Peveril—hath consented to receive obligations from the man on earth I am most bound to hate, were I not still more bound to contemn him!—Degenerate dog-whelp!" he repeated with great vehemence, "you colour, without replying! Speak, and disown such disgrace; or, by the God of my fathers——"

The dwarf suddenly stepped forward, and called out, "Forbear!" with a voice at once so discordant and commanding, that it sounded supernatural. "Man of sin and pride," he said, "forbear; and call not the name of a holy God, to witness thine unhallowed resentments."

The rebuke so boldly and decidedly given, and the moral enthusiasm with which he spoke, gave the despised dwarf an ascendency for the moment over the fiery spirit of his gigantic namesake. Sir Geoffrey Peveril eyed him for an instant askance and shyly, as he might have done a supernatural apparition, and then muttered, "What knowest thou of my cause of wrath?"

"Nothing," said the dwarf;—"nothing but this—that no cause can warrant the oath thou wert about to swear. Ungrateful man! thou wert to-day rescued from the devouring wrath of the wicked, by

a marvellous conjunction of circumstances—Is this a day, thinkest thou, on which to indulge thine own hasty resentments?"

"I stand rebuked," said Sir Geoffrey, "and by a singular monitor—the grasshopper, as the prayer-book saith, hath become a burthen to me.—Julian, I will speak to thee of these matters hereafter;—and for you, Master Bridgenorth, I desire to have no farther communication with you, either in peace or in anger. Our time passes fast, and I would fain return to my family. Cause our weapons to be restored; unbar the doors, and let us part without farther altercation, which can but disturb and aggravate our spirits."

"Sir Geoffrey Peveril," said Bridgenorth, "I have no desire to vex your spirit or my own; but, for thus soon dismissing you, that may hardly be, it being a course inconsistent with the work which I have on hand."

"How, sir! Do you mean that we should abide here, whether with or against our inclinations?" said the dwarf. "Were it not that I am laid under charge to remain here, by one who hath the best right to command this poor microcosm, I would shew thee that bolts and bars are unavailing restraints on such as I am."

"Truly," said Sir Geoffrey, "I think, upon an emergency, the little man might make his escape through the key-hole."

Bridgenorth's face was moved into something like a smile at the swaggering speech of the pigmy hero, and the contemptuous commentary of Sir Geoffrey Peveril; but such an expression never dwelt on his features for two seconds together, and he replied to the dwarf in these words:—"Gentlemen, each and all of you must be fain to content yourselves. Believe me, no hurt is intended towards you; on the contrary, your remaining here will be a means of securing your safety, which would be otherwise deeply endangered. It will be your own faults if a hair of your heads is hurt. But the stronger force is on my side; and, whatever harm you may meet with should you attempt to break forth by violence, the blame must rest with yourselves. If you will not believe me, I will permit Master Julian Peveril to accompany me, where he shall see that I am provided fully with the means of repressing violence."

"Treason!—Treason!" exclaimed the old Knight —"Treason against God and King Charles!—O for one half hour of the broadsword which I parted with like an ass!"

"Hold, my father, I conjure you!" said Julian. "I will go with Master Bridgenorth, since he requests it. I will satisfy myself whether there be danger, and of what nature. It is possible I may prevail on him to desist from some desperate measure, if such be indeed in agitation. Should it be

necessary, fear not that your son will behave as he ought to do."

"Do your pleasure, Julian," said his father; "I will confide in thee. But if you betray my confidence, a father's curse shall cleave to you."

Bridgenorth now motioned to Peveril to follow him, and they passed through the small door by which he had entered.

The passage led to a vestibule or anti-room, in which several other doors and passages seemed to centre. Through one of these Julian was conducted by Bridgenorth, walking with silence and precaution, in obedience to a signal made by his guide to that effect. As they advanced, he heard sounds, like those of the human voice, engaged in urgent and emphatic declamation. With slow and light steps Bridgenorth conducted him through a door which terminated this passage; and as he entered a little gallery, having a curtain in front, the sound of the preacher's voice, for such it now seemed, became distinct and audible.

Julian now doubted not that he was in one of those conventicles, which, though contrary to the existing laws, still continued to be regularly held in different parts of London and the suburbs. Many of these, as frequented by persons of moderate political principles, though dissenters from the church for conscience' sake, were connived at by the prudence or timidity of the government. But some

of them, in which assembled the fiercer and more exalted sects of Independents, Anabaptists, and other sectaries, whose stern enthusiasm had contributed so greatly to effect the overthrow of the late King's throne, were sought after, suppressed, and dispersed, whenever they could be discovered.

Julian was soon satisfied that the meeting into which he was thus secretly introduced, was one of the latter class; and, to judge by the violence of the preacher, of the most desperate character. He was still more effectually convinced of this, when, at a sign from Bridgenorth, he cautiously unclosed a part of the curtain which hung before the gallery, and thus, unseen himself, looked down on the audience, and obtained a view of the preacher.

About two hundred persons were assembled beneath, in an area filled up with benches, as if for the exercise of worship; and they were all of the male sex, and well armed with pikes and muskets, as well as swords and pistols. Most of them had the appearance of veteran soldiers, now past the middle of life, yet retaining such an appearance of strength as might well supply the loss of youthful agility. They stood, or sat, in various attitudes of stern attention; and, resting on their spears and muskets, kept their eyes firmly fixed on the preacher, who ended the violence of his declamation by displaying from the pulpit a banner, on which was represented a lion, with the motto, "*Vicit Leo ex tribu Judæ.*"

The torrent of mystical yet animating eloquence of the preacher—an old gray-haired man, whom zeal seemed to supply with the powers of voice and action, of which years had deprived him—was suited to the taste of his audience, but could not be transferred to these pages without scandal and impropriety. He menaced the rulers of England with all the judgments denounced on those of Moab and Assyria—he called upon the saints to be strong, to be up and doing; and promised those miracles which, in the campaigns of Joshua, and his successors the valiant Judges of Israel, supplied all odds against the Amorites, Midianites, and Philistines.

Julian, with deep anxiety, soon heard enough to make him aware, that the meeting was likely to terminate in open insurrection, like that of the Fifth-Monarchy men, under Venner, at an earlier period of Charles's reign; and he was not a little concerned at the probability of Bridgenorth being implicated in so criminal and desperate an undertaking. If he had retained any doubts of the issue of the meeting, they must have been removed when the preacher called on his hearers to renounce all expectation which had hitherto been entertained of safety to the nation, from the execution of the ordinary laws of the land. This, he said, was at best but a carnal seeking after earthly aid—a going down to Egypt for help, which the jealousy of their Divine Leader would resent as a fleeing to another

rock, and a different banner, from that which was this day displayed over them.—And here he solemnly swung the bannered lion over their heads, as the only sign under which they ought to seek for life and safety. He then proceeded to insist, that recourse to ordinary justice was vain as well as sinful.

"The event of that day at Westminster," he said, "might teach them that the Man at Whitehall was even as the Man his father;" and he closed a long tirade against the vices of the Court, with assurance "that Tophet was ordained of old—for the King it was made hot."

As the preacher entered on a description of the approaching theocracy, which he dared to prophesy, Bridgenorth, who appeared for a time to have forgotten the presence of Julian, whilst with stern and fixed attention he drank in the words of the preacher, seemed suddenly to collect himself, and, taking Julian by the hand, led him out of the gallery, of which he carefully closed the door, into an apartment at no great distance.

When they arrived there, he anticipated the expostulations of Julian, by asking him, in a tone of severe triumph, whether these men he had seen were likely to do their work negligently, or whether it would not be perilous to attempt to force their way from a house, when all the avenues were guarded by such as he had now seen—men of war from their childhood upwards.

"In the name of Heaven," said Julian, without replying to Bridgenorth's question, "for what desperate purpose have you assembled so many desperate men? I am well aware that your sentiments of religion are peculiar; but beware how you deceive yourself—No views of religion can sanction rebellion and murder; and such are the natural and necessary consequences of the doctrine we have just heard poured into the ears of fanatical and violent enthusiasts."

"My son," said Bridgenorth calmly, "in the days of my nonage, I thought as you do. I deemed it sufficient to pay my tithes of cummin and anniseed —my poor petty moral observances of the old law; and I thought I was heaping up precious things, when they were in value no more than the husks of the swine-trough. Praised be Heaven, the scales are fallen from mine eyes; and after forty years' wandering in the desert of Sinai, I am at length arrived in the Land of Promise—My corrupt human nature has left me—I have cast my slough, and can now with some conscience put my hand to the plough, certain that there is no weakness left in me wherethrough I may look back. The furrows," he added, bending his brows, while a gloomy fire filled his large eyes, "must be drawn long and deep, and watered by the blood of the mighty."

There was a change in Bridgenorth's tone and manner, when he used these singular expressions,

which convinced Julian, that his mind, which had wavered for so many years between his natural good sense and the insane enthusiasm of the time, had finally given way to the latter; and, sensible of the danger in which the unhappy man himself, the innocent and beautiful Alice, and his own father, were likely to be placed—to say nothing of the general risk of the community by a sudden insurrection, he at the same time felt that there was no chance of reasoning effectually with one who would oppose spiritual conviction to all arguments which reason could urge against his wild schemes. To touch his feelings seemed a more probable resource; and Julian therefore conjured Bridgenorth to think how much his daughter's honour and safety were concerned in his abstaining from the dangerous course which he meditated. "If you fall," he said, "must she not pass under the power and guardianship of her uncle, whom you allow to have shewn himself capable of the grossest mistake in the choice of her female protectress; and whom I believe, upon good grounds, to have made that infamous choice with his eyes open?"

"Young man," answered Bridgenorth, "you make me feel like the poor bird, around whose wing some wanton boy has fixed a line, to pull the struggling wretch to earth at his pleasure. Know, since thou wilt play this cruel part, and drag me down from higher contemplations, that she with whom

Alice is placed, and who hath in future full power to guide her motions and decide her fate, despite of Christian and every one else, is—I will not tell thee who she is—Enough—no one—thou least of all, needs to fear for her safety."

At this moment a side-door opened, and Christian himself came into the apartment. He started and coloured when he saw Julian Peveril; then turning to Bridgenorth with an assumed air of indifference, asked, "Is Saul among the prophets?—Is a Peveril among the saints?"

"No, brother," replied Bridgenorth, "his time is not come more than thine own—thou art too deep in the ambitious intrigues of manhood, and he in the giddy passions of youth, to hear the still calm voice—You will both hear it, as I trust and pray."

"Master Ganlesse, or Christian, or by whatever name you are called," said Julian, "by whatsoever reasons you guide yourself in this most perilous matter, *you* at least are not influenced by any idea of an immediate divine command for commencing hostilities against the state. Leaving, therefore, for the present, whatever subjects of discussion may be between us, I implore you, as a man of shrewdness and sense, to join with me in dissuading Master Bridgenorth from the fatal enterprize which he now meditates."

"Young gentleman," said Christian, with great

composure, "when we met in the west, I was willing to have made a friend of you, but you rejected the overture. You might, however, even then have seen enough of me to be assured, that I am not like to rush too rashly on any desperate undertaking. As to this which lies before us, my brother Bridgenorth brings to it the simplicity, though not the harmlessness of the dove, and I the subtlety of the serpent. He hath the leading of saints who are moved by the spirit; and I can add to their efforts a powerful body, who have for their instigators, the world, the devil, and the flesh."

"And can you," said Julian, looking at Bridgenorth, "accede to such an unworthy union?"

"I unite not with them," said Bridgenorth; "but I may not, without guilt, reject the aid which Providence sends to assist his servants. We are ourselves few, though determined—Those whose swords come to help the cutting down of the harvest, must be welcome—When their work is wrought, they will be converted or scattered.—Have you been at York-Place, brother, with that unstable epicure? We must have his last resolution, and that within an hour."

Christian looked at Julian, as if his presence prevented him from returning an answer; upon which Bridgenorth arose, and taking the young man by the arm, led him out of the apartment, into that in which they had left his father; assuring

him by the way, that determined and vigilant guards were placed in every different quarter by which escape could be effected, and that he would do well to persuade his father to remain a quiet prisoner for a few hours.

Julian returned him no answer, and he presently retired, leaving him alone with his father and Hudson. To their questions he could only briefly reply, that he feared they were trepanned, since they were in the house with at least two hundred fanatics, completely armed, and apparently prepared for some desperate enterprize. Their own want of arms precluded the possibility of open violence; and however unpleasant it might be to remain in such a condition, it seemed difficult, from the strength of the fastenings at doors and windows, to attempt any secret escape without instantaneous detection.

The valiant dwarf alone nursed hopes, with which he in vain endeavoured to inspire his companions in affliction. "The fair one whose eyes," he said, "like the twin stars of Leda"—for the little man was a great admirer of lofty language—"had not invited him, the most devoted, and, it might be, not the least favoured of her servants, into this place as a harbour, in order that he might therein suffer shipwreck; and he generously assured his friends, that in his safety they also should be safe."

Sir Geoffrey, little cheered by this intimation, ex-

pressed his despair at not being able to get the length of Whitehall, where he trusted to find as many jolly Cavaliers as would help him to stifle the whole nest of wasps in their hive; while Julian was of opinion that the best service he could now render Bridgenorth, would be timeously to disclose his plot, and, if possible, to send him at the same time warning to save his person.

But we must leave them to meditate over their plans at leisure; no one of which, as they all depended on their previous escape from confinement, seemed in any great chance to be executed.

CHAP. III.

> And some for safety took the dreadful leap;
> Some for the voice of Heaven seem'd calling on them;
> Some for advancement, or for lucre's sake—
> I leap'd in frolic.
>
> *The Dream.*

AFTER a private conversation with Bridgenorth, Christian hastened to the Duke of Buckingham's hotel, taking at the same time such a route as to avoid meeting with any acquaintance. He was ushered into the Duke's apartment, whom he found cracking and eating filberts, with a flask of excellent white wine at his elbow. "Christian," said his Grace, "come help me to laugh—I have bit Sir Charles Sedley—flung him for a thousand, by the gods!"

"I am glad at your luck, my Lord Duke," replied Christian; "but I am come here on serious business."

"Serious?—why, I shall hardly be serious in my life again—ha, ha, ha!—and for luck, it was no such thing—sheer wit, and excellent contrivance; and but that I don't care to affront Fortune, like

the old Greek general, I might tell her to her face —in this thou had'st no share. You have heard, Ned Christian, that Mother Cresswell is dead?"

"Yes, I did hear that the devil hath got his due," answered Christian.

"Well," said the Duke, "you are ungrateful; for I know you have been obliged to her, as well as others. Before George, a most benevolent and helpful old lady; and that she might not sleep in an unblest grave, I betted—do you mark me—with Sedley, that I would write her funeral-sermon; that it should be every word in praise of her life and conversation; that it should be all true, and yet that the diocesan should be unable to lay his thumb on Quodling, my little chaplain, who should preach it."

"I perfectly see the difficulty, my lord," said Christian, who well knew that if he wished to secure attention from this volatile nobleman, he must first suffer, nay, encourage him, to exhaust the topic, whatever it might be, that had got temporary possession of his pineal gland.

"Why," said the Duke, "I caused my little Quodling to go through his oration thus—'That whatever evil reports had passed current during the lifetime of the worthy matron whom they had restored to dust that day, malice itself could not deny that she was born well, married well, lived well, and died well; since she was born in Shadwell,

married on Cresswell, lived in Camberwell, and died in Bridewell.' Here ended the oration, and with it Sedley's ambitious hopes of over-reaching Buckingham—ha, ha, ha!—And now, Master Christian, what are your commands for me to-day?"

"First, to thank your Grace for being so attentive as to send so formidable a person as Colonel Blood, to wait upon your poor friend and servant. Faith, he took such an interest in my leaving town, that he wanted to compel me to do it at point of fox, so I was obliged to spill a little of his malapert blood. Your Grace's swordsmen have had ill luck of late; and it is hard, since you always choose the best hands, and such scrupleless knaves too."

"Come now, Christian," said the Duke, "do not thus exult over me; a great man, if I may so call myself, is never greater than amid miscarriage. I only played this little trick on you, Christian, to impress on you a wholesome idea of the interest I take in your motions. The scoundrel's having dared to draw upon you, is a thing not to be forgiven.—What! injure my old friend Christian?"

"And why not," said Christian, coolly, "if your old friend was so stubborn as not to go out of town, like a good boy, when your Grace required him to do so, for the civil purpose of entertaining his niece in his absence?"

"How—what!—how do you mean by *my* enter-

taining your niece, Master Christian?" said the Duke. "She was a personage far beyond my poor attentions, being destined, if I recollect aright, to something like royal favour."

"It was her fate, however, to be guest of your Grace's convent for a brace of days, or so. Marry, my lord, the father confessor was not at home, and —for convents have been scaled of late—returned not till the bird was flown."

"Christian, thou art an old reynard—I see there is no doubling with thee. It was thou, then, stole away my pretty prize, but left me something so much prettier in my mind, that, had it not made itself wings to fly away with, I would have placed it in a cage of gold. Never be downcast, man, I forgive thee—I forgive thee."

"Your Grace is of a most merciful disposition, especially considering it is I who have had the wrong; and sages have said, that he who doth the injury, is less apt to forgive than he who only sustains it."

"True, true,—Christian," said the Duke, "which, as you say, is something quite new, and places my clemency in a striking point of view. Well, then, thou forgiven man, when shall I see my Mauritanian Princess again?"

"Whenever I am certain that a quibble, and a carwhichit, for a play or a sermon, will not banish her from your Grace's memory."

"Not all the wit of South, or of Etherege," said Buckingham, hastily, "to say nothing of my own."

"Yet to leave the fair lady out of thought for a little while—a very little while," said Christian, "since I swear that in due time your Grace shall see her, and know in her the most extraordinary woman that the age has produced—to leave her, I say, out of sight for a little while, has your Grace had late notice of your Duchess's health?"

"Health!" said the Duke. "Umph—no—nothing particular. She has been ill—but——"

"She is no longer so," subjoined Christian; "she died in Yorkshire forty-eight hours since."

"Thou must deal with the devil," said the Duke.

"It would ill become one of my name to do so," replied Christain. "But, in the brief interval since your Grace hath known of an event which hath not yet reached the public ear, you have, I believe, made proposals to the King for the hand of the Lady Anne, second daughter of the Duke of York, and your Grace's proposals have been rejected."

"Fiends and firebrands, villain!" said the Duke, starting up and seizing Christian by the collar; "who hath told thee that?"

"Take your hand from my cloak, my Lord Duke, and I may answer you," said Christian. "I have a scurvy touch of old puritanical humour

about me. I abide not the imposition of hands—take off your grasp from my cloak, or I will find means to make you unloose it."

The Duke, who had kept his right hand on his dagger-hilt while he held Christian's collar with his left, unloosed it as he spoke, but slowly, and as one who rather suspends than abandons the execution of some hasty impulse; while Christian, adjusting his cloak with perfect composure, said, "Soh—my cloak being at liberty, we speak on equal terms. I come not to insult your Grace, but to offer you vengeance for the insult you have received."

"Vengeance!" said the Duke—"It is the dearest proffer man can present to me in my present mood. I hunger for vengeance—thirst for vengeance—could die to insure vengeance!—'Sdeath!" he continued, walking up and down the large apartment with the most unrestrained and violent agitation; "I have chased this repulse out of my brain with ten thousand trifles, because I thought no one knew it. But it is known, and to thee, the very common-sewer of Court secrets—the honour of Villiers is in thy keeping, Ned Christian! Speak, thou man of wiles and of intrigue—on whom dost thou promise the vengeance? Speak! and if thy answers meet my desires, I will make a bargain with thee as willingly as with thy master, Satan himself."

"I will not be," said Christian, "so unreason-

able in my terms as stories tell of the old apostate; I will offer your Grace, as he might do, temporal prosperity and revenge, which is his frequent recruiting money, but I leave it to yourself to provide, as you may be pleased, for your future salvation."

The Duke, gazing upon him fixedly and sadly, replied, "I would to God, Christian, that I could read what purpose of damnable villainy thou hast to propose to me in thy countenance, without the necessity of thy using words!"

"Your Grace can but try," said Christian, calmly smiling.

"No," replied the Duke, after gazing at him again for the space of a minute; "thou art so deeply dyed an hypocrite, that thy mean features, and clear gray eye, are as likely to conceal treason, as any petty scheme of theft or larceny, more corresponding to your degree."

"Treason, my lord!" echoed Christian; "you may have guessed more nearly than you were aware of. I honour your Grace's penetration."

"Treason!" echoed the Duke. "Who dare name such a crime to me?"

"If a name startles your Grace, you may call it vengeance—vengeance on the cabal of councillors, who have ever countermined you, in spite of your wit and your interest with the King.—Vengeance on Arlington, Ormond—on Charles himself."

"No, by Heaven," said the Duke, resuming his disordered walk through the apartment—"Vengeance on these rats of the Privy Council,—come at it as you will. But the King!—never—never. I have provoked him a hundred times, where he has stirred me once. I have crossed his path in state intrigue—rivalled him in love—had the advantage in both,—and, d—n it, he has forgiven me! If treason would put me in his throne, I have no apology for it—it were worse than bestial ingratitude."

"Nobly spoken, my lord," said Christian; "and consistent alike with the obligations under which your Grace lies to Charles Stuart, and the sense you have ever shewn of them.—But it signifies not. If your Grace patronize not our enterprize, there is Shaftesbury—there is Monmouth——"

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed the Duke, even more vehemently agitated than before, "think you that you shall carry on with others an enterprize which I have refused?—No, by every heathen and every Christian god!—Hark ye, Christian, I will arrest you on the spot—I will, by gods and devils, and carry you to unravel your plot at Whitehall."

"Where the first words I speak," answered the imperturbable Christian, "will be to inform the Privy Council where they may find certain letters, wherewith your Grace has honoured your poor vassal, containing, as I think, particulars which his Majesty will read with more surprise than——"

"'Sdeath, villain!" said the Duke, again laying his hand on his poniard-hilt, "thou hast me at advantage. I know not why I forbear to poniard you where you stand!"

"I might fall, my Lord Duke," said Christian, slightly colouring, and putting his right hand into his bosom, "though not, I think, unavenged—for I have not put my person into this peril altogether without means of defence. I might fall, but, alas! your Grace's correspondence is in hands, who, by that very act, would be rendered sufficiently active in handing them to the King and the Privy Council. What say you to the Moorish Princess, my Lord Duke? What if I have left her executrix of my will, with certain instructions how to proceed if I return not unharmed from York Place? O, my lord, though my head is in the wolf's mouth, I was not goose enough to place it there without settling how many carabines should be fired on the wolf, so soon as my dying cackle was heard. Pshaw, my Lord Duke, you deal with a man of sense and courage, yet you speak to him as a child and a coward."

The Duke threw himself into a chair, fixed his eyes on the ground, and spoke without raising them. "I am about to call Jerningham," he said; "but fear nothing—it is only for a draught of wine—That stuff on the table may be a vehicle for filberts and walnuts, but not for such communications as

yours.—Bring me champagne," he said to the attendant who answered on his summons.

The domestic returned, and brought a flask of champagne, with two large silver cups. One of them he filled for Buckingham, who, contrary to the usual etiquette, was always served first at home, and then offered the other to Christian, who declined to receive it.

The Duke drank off the large goblet which was presented to him, and, for a moment, covered his forehead with the palm of his hand; then instantly withdrew it, and said, "Christian, speak your errand plainly. We know each other. If my reputation be in some degree in your hands, you are well aware that your life is in mine. Sit down," he said, taking a pistol from his bosom and laying it on the table—"Sit down, and let me hear your proposal."

"My lord," said Christian, smiling, "I shall produce no such ultimate argument on my part, though possibly, in time of need, I may not be found destitute of them. But my defence is in the situation of things, and in the composed view which, doubtless, your Majesty will take of them."

"Majesty!" repeated the Duke—"My good friend Christian, you have kept company with the Puritans so long, that you confuse the ordinary titles of the Court."

"I know not how to apologize," said Christian,

" unless your Grace will suppose that I spoke by prophecy."

" Such as the devil delivered to Macbeth," said the Duke—again paced the chamber, and again seated himself, and said, " Be plain, Christian—speak out at once, and manfully, what is it you intend."

" *I*," said Christian—" What should I do ?—I can do nothing in such a matter; but I thought it right that your Grace should know that the godly of this city—(he spoke the word with a kind of ironical grin)—are impatient of inactivity, and must needs be up and doing. My brother Bridgenorth is at the head of all old Weiver's congregation; for you must know, that, after floundering from one faith to another, he hath now got beyond ordinances, and is become a Fifth-Monarchy man. He has nigh two hundred of Weiver's people, fully equipped, and ready to fall on; and, with slight aid from your Grace's people, they must carry Whitehall, and make prisoners all within it."

" Rascal !" said the Duke, " and is it to a Peer of England you make this communication ?"

" Nay," answered Christian, " I admit it would be extreme folly in your Grace to appear until all is over. But let me give Blood and the others a hint on your part. There are the four Germans also—right Knipperdolings and Anabaptists—will be specially useful. You are wise, my lord, and

know the value of a corps of domestic gladiators, as well as did Octavius, Lepidus, and Anthony, when, by such family forces, they divided the world by indenture tripartite."

"Stay, stay," said the Duke. "Even if these blood-hounds were to join with you—not that I would permit it without the most positive assurances for the King's personal safety—but say the villains were to join, what hope have you of carrying the Court?"

"Bully Tom Armstrong, my lord, hath promised his interest with the Life Guards. Then there are my Lord Shaftesbury's brisk boys in the city—thirty thousand on the holding up a finger."

"Let him hold up both hands, and if he count a hundred for each finger," said the Duke, "it will be more than I expect. You have not spoken to him?"

"Surely not, till your Grace's pleasure was known. But, if he is not applied to, there is the Dutch train, Hans Snorehout's congregation, in the Strand—there are the French Protestants in Piccadilly—there are the Family of Levi in Lewkenor's Lane—the Muggletonians in Thames Street——"

"Ah, faugh!—Out upon them—out upon them!—How the knaves will stink of cheese and tobacco when they come upon action!—they will drown all the perfumes in Whitehall. Spare me

the detail; and let me know, my dearest Ned, the sum total of thy most odoriferous forces."

"Fifteen hundred men, well armed," said Christian, "besides the rabble that will rise to a certainty—they have already nearly torn to pieces the prisoners who were this day acquitted on account of the Plot."

"All, then, I understand.—And now, hark ye, most christian Christian," said he, wheeling his chair full in front of that on which his agent was seated, "you have told me many things to-day—Shall I be equally communicative? Shall I shew you that my accuracy of information matches yours? Shall I tell you, in a word, why you have at once resolved to push every one, from the Puritan to the free-thinker, upon a general attack of the Palace at Whitehall, without allowing me, a peer of the realm, time either to pause upon or to prepare for a step so desperate? Shall I tell you why you would lead or drive, seduce or compel me, into countenancing your measures?"

"My lord, if you please to form a guess," said Christian, "I will answer with all sincerity, if you have assigned the right cause."

"The Countess of Derby is this day arrived, and attends the Court this evening, with hopes of the kindest reception. She may be surprised amid the melée?—Ha! Said I not right, Master Chris-

tian? You who pretend to offer me revenge, know yourself its exquisite sweetness."

"I would not presume," said Christian, half-smiling, "to offer your Grace a dish, without acting as your taster as well as purveyor."

"That's honestly said," said the Duke. "Away then, my friend. Give Blood this ring—he knows it, and knows how to obey him who bears it. Let him assemble my gladiators, as thou dost most wittily term my *coup jarrets*. The old scheme of the German music may be resorted to, for I think thou hast the instruments ready. But take notice, I know nothing on't; and Rowley's person must be safe—I will hang and burn on all hands if a hair of his black periwig be but singed.—Then what is to follow—a Lord Protector of the realm—or stay—Cromwell has made the word somewhat slovenly and unpopular—a Lord Lieutenant of the Kingdom?—The patriots, who take it on themselves to revenge the injustice done to the country, and to remove evil counsellors from before the King's throne, that it may be henceforward established in righteousness—so I think the rubrick runs—cannot fail to make a fitting choice."

"They cannot, my Lord Duke," said Christian, "since there is but one man in the three kingdoms on whom that choice can possibly fall."

"I thank you, Christian," said his Grace; "and

I trust you. Away, and make all ready. Be assured your services shall not be forgot. We will have you near to us."

"My Lord Duke," said Christian, "you bind me doubly to you. But remember, that as your Grace is spared any obnoxious proceedings which may befal in the way of military execution, or otherwise, so it will be advisable that you hold yourself in preparation, upon a moment's notice, to put yourself at the head of a band of honourable friends and allies, and come presently to the palace, where you will be received by the victors as a commander, and by the vanquished as a preserver."

"I conceive you—I conceive you. I will be in prompt readiness," said the Duke.

"Ay, my lord," continued Christian; "and, for Heaven's sake, let none of those toys, which are the very Delilahs of your imagination, come across you this evening, and interfere with the execution of this sublime scheme."

"Why, Christian, doest think me mad?" was his Grace's emphatic reply. "It is you who linger, when all should be ordered for a deed so daring. Go then.—But hark ye, Ned; ere you go, tell me when I shall again see yonder thing of fire and air—yon eastern Peri, that glides into apartments by the key-hole, and leaves them through the casement—yon black-eyed houri of the Ma-

hometan paradise—when, I say, shall I see her once more?"

"When your Grace has the truncheon of Lord Lieutenant of the Kingdom," said Christian, and left the apartment.

Buckingham stood fixed in contemplation for a moment after he was gone. "Should I have done this?" he said, arguing the matter with himself; "or had I the choice, rather, of doing aught else? Should I not hasten to the Court, and make Charles aware of the treason which besets him? I will, by Heaven!—Here, Jerningham, my coach, with the dispatch of light!—I will throw myself at his feet, and tell him of all the follies which I have dreamed of with this Christian.—And then he will laugh at me, and spurn me.—No, I have kneeled to him to-day already, and my repulse was nothing gentle. To be spurned once in the sun's daily round is enough for Buckingham."

Having made this reflection, he sat down, and began hastily to mark down the young nobles and gentlemen of quality, and others, their very ignoble companions, who he supposed might be likely to assume him for their leader in any popular disturbance. He had nearly completed it, when Jerningham entered, to say the coach would be ready in an instant, and to bring his master's sword, hat, and cloak.

"Let the coachman draw off," said the Duke,

"but be in readiness. And send to the gentlemen thou wilt find named in this list; say I am but ill at ease, and wish their company to a slight collation. Let instant expedition be made, and care not for expense."

The preparations for festivity were speedily made, and the intended guests, most of them persons who were at leisure for any call that promised pleasure, though sometimes more deaf to those of duty, began speedily to assemble. There were many youths of the highest rank, and with them, as is usual in those circles, many of a different class, whom talents, or impudence, or wit, or a turn for gambling, had reared up into companions for the great and the gay. The Duke of Buckingham was a general patron of persons of this description; and a numerous attendance took place on the present occasion.

The festivity was pursued with the usual appliances of wine, music, and games of hazard; with which, however, there mingled in that period much more wit, and a good deal more gross profligacy of conversation, than the talents of the present generation can supply, or their taste would permit.

The Duke himself proved the complete command which he possessed over his versatile character, by maintaining the frolic, the laugh, and the jest, while his ear caught up, and with eagerness, the most distant sounds, as intimating the commencement of Christian's revolutionary project. Such sounds were

heard from time to time, and from time to time they died away, without any of those consequences which Buckingham expected.

At length, and when it was late in the evening, Jerningham announced Master Chiffinch from the Court; and that worthy personage followed the announciation.

"Strange things have happened, my Lord Duke," he said; "your presence at Court is instantly required by his Majesty."

"You alarm me," said Buckingham, standing up. "I hope nothing has happened—I hope there is nothing wrong—I hope his Majesty is well?"

"Perfectly well," said Chiffinch; "and desirous to see your Grace without a moment's delay."

"This is sudden," said the Duke. "You see I have had merry fellows about me, and am scarce in case to appear, Chiffinch."

"Your Grace seems to be in very handsome condition," said Chiffinch; "and you know his Majesty is gracious enough to make allowances."

"True," said the Duke, not a little anxious in his mind, touching the cause of this unexpected summons—"True—his Majesty is most gracious—I will order my coach."

"Mine is below, if your Grace will condescend to use it."

Forced from every evasion, Buckingham took a goblet from the table, and requested his friends to

remain at his palace so long as they could find the means of amusement there. He expected, he said, to return almost immediately; if not, he would take farewell of them with his usual toast, "May all of us that are not hanged in the interval, meet together again here on the first Monday of next month."

This standing toast of the Duke's bore reference to the character of several of his guests; but he did not drink it on the present occasion without some anticipation concerning his own fate, in case Christian had betrayed him. He hastily made some addition to his dress, and attended Chiffinch in the chariot to Whitehall.

CHAP. IV.

High feasting was there there—the gilded roofs
Rung to the wassail-health—the dancer's step
Sprung to the chord responsive—the gay gamester
To fate's disposal flung his heap of gold,
And laugh'd alike when it increased or lessen'd:
Such virtue hath court-air to teach us patience
Which schoolmen preach in vain.

Why come ye not to Court?

UPON the afternoon of the same day, Charles held his Court in the Queen's apartments, which were opened at a particular hour to invited guests of a certain lower degree, but accessible without restriction to the higher classes of nobility who had from birth, and to the courtiers who held by office, the privilege of the *entrée*.

It was one part of Charles's character, which unquestionably rendered him personally popular, and postponed to a subsequent reign the precipitation of his family from the throne, that he banished from his Court many of the formal restrictions with which it was in other reigns surrounded. He was conscious of the good-natured grace of his manners, and trusted to it, often not in vain, to remove evil

impressions arising from actions, which he was sensible could not be justified on the grounds of liberal or national policy.

In the day-time the King was commonly seen in the public walks alone, or only attended by one or two persons; and his answer to the remonstrance of his brother, on the risk of thus exposing his person, is well known;—"Believe me, James," he said, "no one will murder *me*, to make *you* King."

In the same manner, Charles's evenings, unless such as were destined to more secret pleasures, were frequently spent amongst all who had any pretence to approach a courtly circle; and thus it was upon the night which we are treating of. Queen Catherine, reconciled or humbled to her fate, had long ceased to express any feelings of jealousy, nay, seemed so absolutely dead to such a passion, that she received at her drawing-room, without scruple, and even with encouragement, the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland, and others, who enjoyed, though in a less avowed character, the credit of having been royal favourites. Constraint of every kind was banished from a circle so composed, and which was frequented at the same time, if not by the wisest, at least by the wittiest courtiers, who ever assembled round a Monarch, and who, as many of them had shared the wants, and shifts, and frolics of his exile, had then acquired a sort of prescriptive

licence, which the good-natured prince, when he attained his period of prosperity, could hardly have restrained had it suited his temper to do so. This, however, was the least of Charles's thoughts. His manners were such as secured him from indelicate obtrusion; and he sought no other protection from over-familiarity, than what these and his ready wit afforded him.

On the present occasion, he was peculiarly disposed to enjoy the scene of pleasure which had been prepared. The singular death of Major Coleby, which, taking place in his own presence, had proclaimed, with the voice of a passing bell, the ungrateful neglect of the Prince for whom he had sacrificed everything, had given Charles much pain. But, in his own opinion at least, he had completely atoned for this negligence, by the trouble which he had given himself to interfere in favour of Sir Geoffrey Peveril and his son, whose liberation not only he considered as an excellent good deed in itself, but, in spite of the grave rebuke of Ormond, as achieved in a very pardonable manner, considering the difficulties with which he was surrounded. He even felt a degree of satisfaction on receiving intelligence from the city that there had been disturbances in the streets, and that some of the more violent fanatics had betaken themselves to their meeting-houses, upon sudden summons, to inquire, as their preachers phrased it, into the causes of Heaven's wrath,

and into the backsliding of the Court, lawyers, and jury, by whom the false and bloody favourers of the Popish Plot were screened and cloaked from deserved punishment.

The King, we repeat, seemed to hear these accounts with pleasure, even when he was reminded of the dangerous and susceptible character of those with whom such suspicions originated. "Will any one now assert," he said, with self-complacence, "that I am so utterly negligent of the interest of friends?—You see the peril in which I place myself, and even the risk to which I have exposed the public peace, to rescue a man whom I have scarce seen for twenty years, and then only in his buff-coat and bandaliers, with other Train-Band officers who kissed hands upon the Restoration. They say kings have long hands—I think they have as much occasion for long memories, since they are expected to watch for and reward every man in England, who hath but shewn his good will by crying 'God save the King!'"

"Nay, the rogues are even more unreasonable still," said Sedley; "for every knave of them thinks himself entitled to your Majesty's protection in a good cause, whether he has cried God save the King or no."

The King smiled, and turned to another part of the stately hall, where everything was assembled

which could, according to the taste of the age, make the time glide pleasantly away.

In one place, a group of the young nobility, and of the ladies of the Court, listened to the reader's acquaintance Empson, who was accompanying, with his unrivalled breathings on the flute, a young syren, who, while her bosom palpitated with pride and with fear, warbled to the courtly and august presence the beautiful air beginning,

> " Young I am, and yet unskill'd
> How to make a lover yield," &c.

She performed her task in a manner so corresponding with the strains of the amatory poet, and the voluptuous air with which the words had been invested by the celebrated Purcel, that the men crowded around in ecstasies, while most of the ladies thought it proper either to look extremely indifferent to the words she sung, or to withdraw from the circle as quietly as possible. To the song succeeded a concerto, performed by a select band of most admirable musicians, which the King, whose taste was indisputable, had himself selected.

At other tables in the apartment, the elder courtiers worshipped Fortune, at the various fashionable games of ombre, quadrille, hazard, and the like; while heaps of gold which lay before the players, augmented or dwindled with every turn of a card

or cast of a die. Many a year's rent of fair estates was ventured upon the main or the odds; which, spent in the old deserted manor-house, had repaired the ravages of Cromwell upon its walls, and replaced the sources of good house-keeping and hospitality, that, exhausted in the last age by fine and sequestration, were now in the present in a fair way of annihilation by careless prodigality. Elsewhere, under cover of observing the gamester, or listening to the music, the gallantries of that all-licensed age were practised among the gay and fair, closely watched the whilst by the ugly or the old, who promised themselves at least the pleasure of observing, and it may be that of proclaiming, intrigues in which they could not be sharers.

From one table to another glided the merry Monarch, exchanging now a glance with a Court beauty, now a jest with a Court wit, now beating time to the music, and anon losing or winning a few pieces of gold on the chance of the game to which he stood nearest;—the most amiable of voluptuaries—the gayest and best-natured of companions—the man that would, of all others, have best sustained his character, had life been a continued banquet, and its only end to enjoy the passing hour, and send it away as pleasantly as might be.

But Kings are least of all exempted from the ordinary lot of humanity; and Seged of Ethiopia is amongst monarchs no solitary example, of the va-

nity of reckoning on a day or an hour of undisturbed serenity. An attendant on the Court announced suddenly to their Majesties that a lady, who would only announce herself as a Peeress of England, desired to be admitted into the presence.

The Queen said, hastily, it was *impossible*. No peeress, without announcing her title, was entitled to the privilege of her rank.

"I could be sworn," said a nobleman in attendance, "that it is some whim of the Duchess of Newcastle."

The attendant, who brought the message, said, that he did indeed believe it to be the Duchess, both from the singularity of the message, and that the lady spoke with somewhat a foreign accent.

"In the name of madness, then," said the King, "let us admit her. Her Grace is an entire raree-show in her own person—a universal masquerade—indeed a sort of private Bedlam-hospital, her whole ideas being like so many patients crazed upon the subjects of love and literature, who act nothing in their vagaries, save Minerva, Venus, and the nine Muses."

"Your Majesty's pleasure must always supersede mine," said the Queen. "I only hope I shall not be expected to entertain so fantastic a personage. The last time she came to court, Isabella,"—(she spoke to one of her Portuguese ladies of honour)—"you were not returned from our lovely

Lisbon!—her Grace had the assurance to pretend right to bring a train-bearer into my apartment; and when this was not allowed, what then, think you, she did?—even caused her train to be made so long, that three mortal yards of satin and silver remained in the anti-chamber, supported by four wenches, while the other end was attached to her Grace's person, as she paid her duty at the upper end of the presence room. Full thirty yards of the most beautiful silk did her Grace's madness employ in this manner."

"And most beautiful damsels they were who bore this portentous train," said the King—"a train never equalled save by that of the great comet in sixty-six. Sedley and Etherege told us wonders of them; for it is one advantage of this new fashion brought up by the Duchess, that a matron may be totally unconscious of the coquetry of her train and its attendants."

"Am I to understand, then, your Majesty's pleasure is, that the lady is to be admitted?" said the usher.

"Certainly," said the King; "that is, if the incognita be really entitled to the honour.—It may be as well to inquire her title—there are more madwomen abroad than the Duchess of Newcastle. I will walk into the anti-room myself, and receive your answer."

But ere Charles had reached the lower end of

the apartment in his progress to the anti-room, the usher surprised the assembly by announcing a name which had not for many a year been heard in these courtly halls—"The Countess of Derby!"

Stately and tall, and still, at an advanced period of life, having a person unbroken by years, the noble lady advanced towards her Sovereign, with a step resembling that with which she might have met an equal. There was indeed nothing in her manner that indicated either haughtiness or assumption unbecoming that presence; but her consciousness of wrongs, sustained from the administration of Charles, and of the superiority of the injured party over those from whom, or in whose name, the injury had been offered, gave her look dignity, and her step firmness. She was dressed in widow's weeds, of the same fashion which were worn at the time her husband was brought to the scaffold; and which, in the thirty years subsequent to that event, she had never permitted her tire-woman to alter.

The surprise was no pleasing one to the King; and cursing in his heart the rashness which had allowed the lady entrance on the gay scene in which they were engaged, he saw at the same time the necessity of receiving her in a manner suitable to his own character, and her rank in the British Court. He approached her with an air of welcome, into which he threw all his natural grace, while he began,

"*Chere Comptesse de Derby, puissante Reine de Man, notre tres auguste sœur*——"

"Speak English, sire, if I may presume to ask such a favour," said the Countess. "I am a Peeress of this nation—mother to one English Earl, and widow, alas, to another! In England I have spent my brief days of happiness, my long years of widowhood and sorrow. France and its language are but to me the dreams of an uninteresting childhood. I know no tongue save that of my husband and my son. Permit me, as the widow and mother of Derby, thus to render my homage."

She would have kneeled, but the King gracefully prevented her, and, saluting her cheek, according to the form, led her towards the Queen, and himself performed the ceremony of introduction. "Your Majesty," he said, "must be informed, that the Countess has imposed a restriction on French—the language of gallantry and compliment. I trust your Majesty will, though a foreigner like herself, find enough of honest English to assure the Countess of Derby, with what pleasure we see her at Court, after the absence of so many years."

"I will endeavour to do so at least," said the Queen, on whom the appearance of the Countess of Derby made a more favourable impression than that of many strangers, whom, at the King's request, she was in the habit of receiving with courtesy.

Charles himself again spoke. "To any other lady of the same rank I might put the question, why she was so long absent from the circle? I fear I can only ask the Countess of Derby, what fortunate cause produces the pleasure of seeing her here?"

"No fortunate cause, my liege, though one most strong and urgent."

The King augured nothing agreeable from this commencement; and in truth, from the Countess's first entrance, he had anticipated some unpleasant explanation, which he therefore hastened to parry, having first composed his features into an expression of sympathy and interest.

"If," said he, "the cause is of a nature in which we can render assistance, we cannot expect your ladyship should enter upon it at the present time; but a memorial addressed to our secretary, or, if it is more satisfactory, to ourselves directly, will receive our immediate, and, I trust I need not add, our favourable construction."

The Countess bowed with some state, and answered, "My business, sire, is indeed important; but so brief, that it need not for more than a few minutes withdraw your ear from what is more pleasing;—yet it is so urgent, that I am afraid to postpone it even for a moment."

"This is unusual," said Charles. "But you, Countess of Derby, are an unwonted guest, and

must command my time. Does the matter require my private ear?"

"For my part," said the Countess, "the whole Court might listen; but your Majesty may prefer hearing me in the presence of one or two of your counsellors."

"Ormond," said the King, looking around, "attend us for an instant,—and do you, Arlington, do the same."

The King led the way into an adjoining cabinet, and, seating himself, requested the Countess would also take a chair. "It needs not, sire," she replied; then paused for a moment, as if to collect her spirits, then proceeded with firmness.

"Your Majesty well said that no light cause had drawn me from my lonely habitation. I came not hither when the property of my son—that property which descended to him from a father who died for your Majesty's rights—was conjured away from him under pretext of justice, that it might first feed the avarice of the rebel Fairfax, and then supply the prodigality of his son-in-law, Buckingham."

"These are over harsh terms, lady," said the King. "A legal penalty was, as we remember, incurred by an act of irregular violence—so our courts and our laws term it, though personally I have no objection to call it with you, an honourable revenge. But admit it were such, in prosecution of the laws of honour, bitter legal consequences are often necessarily incurred."

"I come not to argue for my son's wasted and forfeited inheritance, sire," said the Countess; "I only take credit for my patience, under that afflicting dispensation. I now come to redeem the honour of the House of Derby, more dear to me than all the treasures and lands which ever belonged to it."

"And by whom is the honour of the House of Derby impeached?" said the King; "for on my word you bring me the first news of it."

"Has there one Narrative, as these wild fictions are termed, been printed with regard to the Popish Plot—this pretended Plot, as I will call it—in which the honour of our house has not been touched and tainted? And are there not two noble gentlemen, father and son, allies of the House of Stanley, about to be placed in jeopardy of their lives, on account of matters in which we are the parties first impeached?"

The King looked around, and smiled to Arlington and Ormond. "The Countess's courage, methinks, shames ours. What lips dared have called the immaculate Plot *pretended*, or the Narrative of the witnesses, our preservers from Popish knives, a wild fiction?—But, madam," he said, "though I admire the generosity of your interference in behalf of the two Peverils, I must acquaint you, that your interference is unnecessary—they are this morning acquitted."

"Now may God be praised!" said the Countess, folding her hands. "I have scarce slept since I heard the news of their impeachment; and have arrived here to surrender myself to your Majesty's justice, or to the prejudices of the nation, in hopes, by so doing, I might at least save the lives of my noble and generous friends, enveloped in suspicion only, or chiefly, by their connexion with us.—Are they indeed acquitted?"

"They are, by my honour," said the King. "I marvel you heard not of it."

"I arrived but last night, and remained in the strictest seclusion," said the Countess, "afraid to make any inquiries that might occasion discovery ere I saw your Majesty."

"And now that we *have* met," said the King, taking her hand kindly—"a meeting which gives me the greatest pleasure—may I recommend to you speedily to return to your royal island with as little eclat as you came hither? The world, my dear Countess, has changed since we were young. Men fought in the Civil War with good swords and muskets; but now we fight with indictments and oaths, and such like legal weapons. You are no adept in such warfare; and though I am well aware you know how to hold out a castle, I doubt much if you have the art to parry off an impeachment. This Plot has come upon us like a land storm—there is no steering the vessel in the teeth

of the tempest—we must run for the nearest haven, and happy if we can reach one."

"This is cowardice, my Liege," said the Countess,—"Forgive the word!—it is but a woman who speaks it. Call your noble friends around you, and make a stand like your royal father. There is but one right and one wrong—one honourable and forward course; and all others which deviate are oblique and unworthy."

"Your language, my venerated friend," said Ormond,—who saw the necessity of interfering betwixt the dignity of the actual Sovereign, and the freedom of the Countess, who was generally accustomed to receive, not to pay observance,—"your language is strong and decided, but it applies not to the times. It might occasion a renewal of the Civil War, and of all its miseries, but could hardly be attended with the effects you sanguinely anticipate."

"You are too rash, my Lady Countess," said Arlington, "not only to rush upon this danger yourself, but to desire to involve his Majesty. Let me say plainly, that, in this jealous time, you have done but ill to exchange the security of Castle Rushin for the chance of a lodging in the Tower of London."

"And were I to kiss the block there," said the Countess, "as did my husband at Bolton-on-the-Moors, I would do so willingly, rather than forsake

a friend!—and one, too, whom, as in the case of the younger Peveril, I have thrust upon danger."

"But have I not assured you that both of the Peverils, elder and younger, are freed from peril?" said the King; "and, my dear Countess, what can else tempt you to thrust *yourself* on danger, from which, doubtless, you expect to be relieved by my intervention? Methinks a lady of your judgment should not voluntarily throw herself into a river, merely that her friends might have the risk and merit of dragging her out."

The Countess reiterated her intention to claim a fair trial.—The two counsellors again pressed their advice that she should withdraw, though under the charge of absconding from justice, and remain in her own feudal kingdom.

The King, seeing no termination to the debate, gently reminded the Countess that her Majesty would be jealous if he detained her ladyship longer, and offered her his hand to conduct her back to the company. This she was under the necessity of accepting, and returned accordingly to the apartments of state, where an event occurred immediately afterwards, which must be transferred to the next chapter.

CHAP. V.

Here stand I tight and trim,
Quick of eye, though little of limb;
He who denieth the word I have spoken,
Betwixt him and me shall lances be broken.
Lay of the Little John de Saintré.

WHEN Charles had re-conducted the Countess of Derby into the presence-chamber, before he parted with her, he entreated her, in a whisper, to be governed by good counsel, and to regard her own safety; and then turned easily from her, as if to distribute his attentions equally among the other guests.

These were a good deal circumscribed at the instant by the arrival of a party of five or six musicians; one of whom, a German, under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham, was particularly renowned for his performance on the violoncello, but had been detained in inactivity in the antichamber by the non-arrival of his instrument, which had now at length made its appearance.

The domestic who placed it before the owner, shrouded as it was within its wooden case, seemed heartily glad to be rid of his load, and lingered for

a moment, as if interested in discovering what sort of instrument was to be produced that could weigh so heavily. His curiosity was satisfied, and in a most extraordinary manner; for, while the musician was fumbling with the key, the case being for his greater convenience placed upright against the wall, the case and instrument itself at once flew open, and out started the dwarf, Geoffrey Hudson, —at sight of whose unearthly appearance, thus suddenly introduced, the ladies shrieked, and ran backwards; the gentlemen started; and the poor German, on seeing the portentous delivery of his fiddle-case, tumbled on the floor in an agony, supposing, it might be, that his instrument was metamorphosed into the strange figure which supplied its place. So soon, however, as he recovered, he glided out of the apartment, and was followed by most of his companions.

"Hudson!" said the King—"My little old friend, I am not sorry to see you; though Buckingham, who I suppose is the purveyor of this jest, hath served us up but a stale one."

"Will your Majesty honour me with one moment's attention?" said Hudson.

"Assuredly, my good friend," said the King. "Old acquaintances are springing up in every quarter to-night; and our leisure can hardly be better employed than in listening to them.—It was an idle trick of Buckingham," he added, in a

whisper to Ormond, "to send the poor thing hither, especially as he was to-day tried for the affair of the Plot. At any rate, he comes not to ask protection from us, having had the rare fortune to come off *Plot-free*. He is but fishing, I suppose, for some little present or pension."

The little man, precise in Court etiquette, yet impatient of the King's delaying to attend to him, stood in the midst of the floor, most valorously pawing and prancing, like a Scots pony assuming the airs of a war-horse, waving meanwhile his little hat with the tarnished feather, and bowing from time to time, as if impatient to be heard.

"Speak on, then, my friend," said Charles; "if thou hast some poetical address penned for thee, out with it, that thou mayst have time to repose these flourishing little limbs of thine."

"No poetical speech have I, most mighty Sovereign," answered the dwarf; "but, in plain and most loyal prose, I do accuse, before this company, the once noble Duke of Buckingham of high treason!"

"Well spoken, and manfully—Get on, man," said the King, who never doubted that this was the introduction to something burlesque or witty, not conceiving that the charge was made in solemn earnest.

A great laugh took place among such courtiers as heard, and among many who did not hear, what

was uttered by the dwarf; the former entertained by the extravagant emphasis and gesticulation of the little champion, and the others laughing not the less loud that they laughed for example's sake, and upon trust.

"What matter is there for all this mirth?" said he, very indignantly—"Is it fit subject for laughing, that I, Geoffrey Hudson, Knight, do, before King and nobles, impeach George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, of high treason?"

"No subject of mirth, certainly," said Charles, composing his features; "but great matter of wonder.—Come, cease this mouthing, and prancing, and mummery.—If there be a jest, come out with it, man; and if not, even get thee to the beauffit, and drink a cup of wine to refresh thee after thy close lodging."

"I tell you, my liege," said Hudson, impatiently, yet in a whisper, intended only to be audible by the King, "that if you spend over much time in trifling, you will be convinced by dire experience of Buckingham's treason. I tell you,—I asseverate to your Majesty,—two hundred armed fanatics will be here within the hour, to surprise the guards."

"Stand back, ladies," said the King, "or you may hear more than you will care to listen to. My Lord of Buckingham's jests are not always, you know, quite fitted for female ears; besides, we want a few words in private with our little friend.

You, my Lord of Ormond—you, Arlington, (and he named one or two others,) may remain with us."

The gay crowd bore back, and dispersed through the apartment—the men to conjecture what the end of this mummery, as they supposed it, was likely to prove; and what jest, as Sedley said, the bass-fiddle had been brought to bed of—and the ladies to admire and criticise the antique dress and richly embroidered ruff and hood of the Countess of Derby, to whom the Queen was shewing particular attention.

"And now, in the name of Heaven, and amongst friends," said the King to the dwarf, "what means all this?"

"Treason, my lord the King!—Treason to his Majesty of England!—When I was chambered in yonder instrument, my lord, the High-Dutch fellows who bore me, carried me into a certain chapel, to see, as they said to each other, that all was ready. Sire, I went where bass-fiddle never went before, even into a conventicle of Fifth-Monarchists; and when they brought me away, the preacher was concluding his sermon, and was within a 'Now to apply' of setting off like the bell-wether at the head of his flock, to surprise your Majesty in your royal Court! I heard him through the sound-holes of my instrument, when the fellow set me down for a moment to profit by this precious doctrine."

"It would be singular," said Lord Arlington,

" were there some reality at the bottom of this buffoonery; for we know these wild men have been consulting together to-day, and five conventicles have held a solemn fast."

" Nay," said the King, " if that be the case, they are certainly determined on some villainy."

" Might I advise," said the Duke of Ormond, " I would summon the Duke of Buckingham to this presence. His connexions with the fanatics are well known, though he affects to conceal them."

" You would not, my lord, do his Grace the injustice to treat him as a criminal on such a charge as this?" said the King. " However," he added, after a moment's consideration, " Buckingham is accessible to every sort of temptation, from the flightiness of his genius. I should not be surprised if he nourished hopes of an aspiring kind—I think we had some proof of it but lately.—Hark ye, Chiffinch; go to him instantly, and bring him here on any fair pretext thou canst devise. I would fain save him from what lawyers call an overt act. The Court were dull as a dead horse, were Buckingham to miscarry."

" Will not your Majesty order the Horse Guards to turn out?" said young Selby, who was present, and an officer.

" No, Selby," said the King, " I like not horse play. But let them be prepared; and let the High Bailiff get his civil officers in readiness, in

case of any sudden tumult—double the sentinels on the doors of the palace—and see no strangers get in."

"Or *out*," said the Duke of Ormond. "Where are the foreign fellows who brought in the dwarf?"

They were sought for, but they were not to be found. They had retreated, leaving their instruments—a circumstance which seemed to bear hard on the Duke of Buckingham, their patron.

Hasty preparations were made to provide resistance to any effort of despair which the supposed conspirators might be driven to; and in the meanwhile, the King, withdrawing with Arlington, Ormond, and a few other counsellors, into the cabinet where the Countess of Derby had had her audience, resumed the examination of the little discoverer. His declaration, though singular, was quite coherent; the strain of romance intermingled with it being in fact a part of his character, which often gained him the fate of being laughed at, when he would otherwise have been pitied or even esteemed.

He commenced with a flourish about his sufferings for the Plot, which the impatience of Ormond would have cut short, had not the King reminded his Grace, that a top, when it is not flogged, must needs go down of itself at the end of a definite time, while the application of the whip may keep it up for hours.

Geoffrey Hudson was, therefore, allowed to exhaust himself on the subject of his prison-house, which he informed the King was not without a beam of light—an emanation of loveliness—a mortal angel—quick of step and beautiful of eye, who had more than once visited his confinement with words of cheering and comfort.

"By my faith," said the King, "they fare better in Newgate than I was aware of. Who would have thought of the little gentleman being solaced with female society in such a place?"

"I pray your Majesty," said the dwarf, after the manner of a solemn protest, "to understand nothing amiss. My devotion to this fair creature is rather like what we poor Catholics pay to the blessed saints, than mixed with any grosser quality. Indeed, she seems rather a sylphid of the Rosicrucian system, than aught more carnal; being slighter, lighter, and less than the females of common life, who have something of that coarseness of make which is doubtless derived from the sinful and gigantic race of the antediluvians."

"Well, say on, man," quoth Charles. "Didst thou not discover this sylph to be a mere mortal wench after all?"

"Who?—I, my liege?—O fie!"

"Nay, little gentleman, do not be so particularly scandalized," said the King; "I promise you I suspect you of no audacity of gallantry."

"Time wears fast," said the Duke of Ormond, impatiently, and looking at his watch. "Chiffinch hath been gone ten minutes, and ten minutes will bring him back."

"True," said Charles, gravely. "Come to the point, Hudson; and tell us what this female has to do with your coming hither in this extraordinary manner."

"Everything, my lord," said little Hudson. "I saw her twice during my confinement in Newgate, and, in my thought, she is the very angel who guards my life and welfare; for, after my acquittal, as I walked towards the city with two tall gentlemen, who had been in trouble along with me, and just while we stood to our defence against a rascally mob, and just as I had taken possession of an elevated situation to have some vantage against the great odds of numbers, I heard a heavenly voice sound, as it were, from a window behind me, counselling me to take refuge in a certain house; to which measure I readily persuaded my gallant friends the Peverils, who have always shewn themselves willing to be counselled by me."

"Shewing therein their wisdom at once and modesty," said the King. "But what chanced next? Be brief—be like thyself, man."

"For a time, sire," said the dwarf, "it seemed as if I were not the principal object of attention. First, he younger Peveril was withdrawn from us

by a gentleman of venerable appearance, though somewhat smacking of a Puritan, having boots of neat's-leather, and wearing his weapon without a sword-knot. When Master Julian returned, he informed us, for the first time, that we were in the power of a body of armed fanatics, who were, as the poet says, prompt for direful act. And your Majesty will remark, that both father and son were in some measure desperate, and disregardful from that moment of the assurances which I gave them, that the star which I was bound to worship, would, in her own time, shine forth in signal of our safety. May it please your Majesty, in answer to my hilarious exhortations to confidence, the father did but say *tush*, and the son *pshaw*, which shewed how men's prudence and manners are disturbed by affliction. Nevertheless, these two gentlemen, the Peverils, forming a strong opinion of the necessity there was to break forth, were it only to convey a knowledge of these dangerous passages to your Majesty, commenced an assault on the door of the apartment, I also assisting with the strength which Heaven hath given, and some threescore years have left me. We could not, as it unhappily proved, manage our attempt so silently, but that our guards overheard us, and, entering in numbers, separated us from each other, and compelled my companions, at point of pike and poniard, to go to some other and more distant apartment, thus separating our fair society.

I was again enclosed in the now solitary chamber, and I will own that I felt a certain depression of soul. But when bale is at highest, as the poet singeth, boot is at nighest, for a door of hope was suddenly opened——"

"In the name of God, my liege," said the Duke of Ormond, "let this poor creature's story be translated into the language of common sense by some of the scribblers of romances about Court, and we may be able to make meaning of it."

Geoffrey Hudson looked with a frowning countenance of reproof upon the impatient old Irish nobleman, and said, with a very dignified air, "That one duke upon a poor gentleman's hand was enough at one time, and that, but for his present engagement and dependency with the Duke of Buckingham, he would have endured no such terms from the Duke of Ormond."

"Abate your valour, and diminish your choler, at our request, most puissant Sir Geoffrey Hudson," said the King; "and forgive the Duke of Ormond for my sake; but at all events go on with your story."

Geoffrey Hudson laid his hand on his bosom, and bowed in proud and dignified submission to his Sovereign; then waved his forgiveness gracefully to Ormond, accompanied with a horrible grin, which he designed for a smile of gracious forgiveness and conciliation. "Under the Duke's favour, then," he

proceeded, " when I said a door of hope was opened to me, I meant a door behind the tapestry, from whence issued that fair vision—yet not so fair as lustrously dark, like the beauty of a continental night, where the cloudless azure sky shrouds us in a veil more lovely than that of day!—But I note your Majesty's impatience;—enough. I followed my beautiful guide into an apartment, where there lay, strangely intermingled, warlike arms and musical instruments. Amongst these I saw my own late place of temporary obscurity—a violoncello. To my astonishment, she turned around the instrument, and opening it behind by pressure of a spring, shewed that it was filled with pistols, daggers, and ammunition made up in bandeliers. 'These,' she said, 'are this night destined to surprise the Court of the unwary Charles'—your Majesty must pardon my using her own words; 'but if thou darest go in their stead, thou mayest be the saviour of king and kingdoms; if thou art afraid, keep secret, I will myself try the adventure.' Now, may Heaven forbid, that Geoffrey Hudson were craven enough, said I, to let thee run such a risk! You know not —you cannot know, what belongs to such ambuscades and concealments—I am accustomed to them —have lurked in the pocket of a giant, and have formed the contents of a pasty. 'Get in, then,' she said, 'and lose no time.' Nevertheless, while I prepared to obey, I will not deny that some cold ap-

prehensions came over my hot valour, and I confessed to her, if it might so be, I would rather find my way to the palace on my own feet. But she would not listen to me, saying hastily, 'I would be intercepted, or refused admittance, and that I must embrace the means she offered me of introduction into the presence, and when there, tell the King to be on his guard—little more is necessary; for once the scheme is known, it becomes desperate.' Rashly and boldly, I bid adieu to the day-light which was then fading away. She withdrew the contents of the instrument destined for my concealment, and having put them behind the chimney-board, introduced me in their room. As she clasped me in, I implored her to warn the men who were to be intrusted with me, to take heed and keep the neck of the violoncello uppermost; but ere I had completed my request, I found I was left alone, and in darkness. Presently, two or three fellows entered, whom, by their language, which I in some sort understood, I perceived to be Germans, and under the influence of the Duke of Buckingham. I heard them receive from the leader a charge how they were to deport themselves, when they should assume the concealed arms—and—for I will do the Duke no wrong—I understood their orders were precise, not only to spare the person of the King, but also those of the courtiers, and to protect all who might be in the presence against an irruption

of the fanatics. In other respects, they had charge to disarm the Gentlemen-pensioners in the guard-room, and, in fine, to obtain the command of the Court."

The King looked disconcerted and thoughtful at this communication, and bade Lord Arlington see that Selby quietly made search into the contents of the other cases which had been brought as containing musical instruments. He then signed to the dwarf to proceed in his story, asking him again and again, and very solemnly, whether he was sure that he heard the Duke's name mentioned, as commanding or approving this action.

The dwarf answered in the affirmative.

"This," said the King, "is carrying the frolic somewhat far."

The dwarf proceeded to state, that he was carried after his metamorphosis into the chapel, where he heard the preacher seemingly about the close of his harangue, the tenor of which he also mentioned. Words, he said, could not express the agony which he felt when he found that his bearer, in placing the instrument in a corner, was about to invert its position, in which case, he said, human frailty might have proved too great for love, for loyalty, for true obedience, nay, for the fear of death, which was like to ensue on discovery; and he concluded, that he greatly doubted he could not have

stood on his head for many minutes without screaming aloud.

"I could not have blamed you," said the King; "placed in such a posture in the royal oak, I must needs have roared myself.—Is this all you have to tell us of this strange conspiracy?" Sir Geoffrey Hudson replied in the affirmative, and the King presently subjoined—"Go, my little friend, your services shall not be forgotten. Since thou hast crept into the bowels of a fiddle for our service, we are bound, in duty and conscience, to find you a more roomy dwelling in future."

"It was a violoncello, if your Majesty is pleased to remember," said the little jealous man, "not a common fiddle; though, for your Majesty's service, I would have crept even into a kit."

"Whatever of that nature could have been performed by any subject of ours, thou wouldst have enacted in our behalf—of that we hold ourselves certain. Withdraw for a little; and hark ye, for the present, beware what you say about this matter. Let your appearance be considered—do you mark me—as a frolic of the Duke of Buckingham; and not a word of conspiracy."

"Were it not better to put him under some restraint, sire?" said the Duke of Ormond, when Hudson had left the room.

"It is unnecessary," said the King. "I remember the little wretch of old. Fortune, to make him

the model of absurdity, has closed a most lofty soul within that little miserable carcase. For wielding his sword and keeping his word, he is a perfect Don Quixote in decimo-sexto. He shall be taken care of.—But, oddsfish, my lords, is not this freak of Buckingham too villainous and ungrateful?"

"He had not had the means of being so, had your Majesty," said the Duke of Ormond, "been less lenient on other occasions."

"My lord, my lord," said Charles, hastily—"your lordship is Buckingham's known enemy—we will take other and more impartial counsel.—Arlington, what think you of all this?"

"May it please your Majesty," said Arlington, "I think the thing is absolutely impossible, unless the Duke has had some quarrel with your Majesty, of which we know nothing. His Grace is very flighty, doubtless, but this seems actual insanity."

"Why, faith," said the King, "some words passed betwixt us this morning—his Duchess it seems is dead—and to lose no time, his Grace had cast his eyes about for means of repairing the loss, and had the assurance to ask our consent to woo my niece Lady Anne."

"Which your Majesty of course rejected," said the statesman.

"And not without rebuking his assurance," added the King.

"In private, sir, or before any witnesses?" said the Duke of Ormond.

"Before no one," said the King,—"excepting, indeed, little Chiffinch; and he, you know, is no one."

"*Hinc illæ lachrymæ*," said Ormond. "I know his Grace well. While the rebuke of his aspiring petulance was a matter betwixt your Majesty and him, he might have let it pass by; but a check before a fellow from whom it was likely enough to travel through the Court, was a matter to be revenged."

Here Selby came hastily from the other room, to say, that his Grace of Buckingham had just entered the presence chamber.

The King rose. "Let a boat be in readiness, with a party of the yeomen," said he. "It may be necessary to attach him of treason, and send him to the Tower."

"Should not a Secretary of State's warrant be prepared?" said Ormond.

"No, my Lord Duke," said the King, sharply. "I still hope that the necessity may be avoided."

CHAP. IV.

High reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
Richard III.

BEFORE giving the reader an account of the meeting betwixt Buckingham and his injured Sovereign, we may mention a trifling circumstance or two which took place betwixt his Grace and Chiffinch, in the short drive betwixt York Place and Whitehall.

In the outset, the Duke endeavoured to learn from the courtier the special cause of his being summoned so hastily to the Court. Chiffinch answered, cautiously, that he believed there were some gambols going forward, at which the King desired the Duke's presence.

This did not quite satisfy Buckingham, for, conscious of his own rash purpose, he could not but apprehend discovery. After a moment's silence, "Chiffinch," he said, abruptly, "did you mention to any one what the King said to me this morning touching the Lady Anne?"

"My Lord Duke," said Chiffinch, hesitating, "surely my duty to the King—my respect to your Grace——"

"You mentioned it to no one, then?" said the Duke, sternly.

"To no one," replied Chiffinch, faintly, for he was intimidated by the Duke's increasing severity of manner.

"Ye lie, like a scoundrel!" said the Duke—"You told Christian!"

"Your Grace," said Chiffinch—"your Grace—your Grace ought to remember that I told you Christian's secret; that the Countess of Derby was come up."

"And you think the one point of treachery may balance for the other? But no. I must have a better atonement. Be assured I will blow your brains out, ere you leave this carriage, unless you tell me the truth of this message from Court."

As Chiffinch hesitated what reply to make, a man, who, by the blaze of the torches, then always borne, as well by the lacqueys who hung behind the carriage, as by the footmen who ran by the side, might easily see who sat in the coach, approached, and sung in a deep manly voice, the burthen of an old French song on the battle of Marignan, in which is imitated the German-French of the defeated Swiss.

Tout est verlore
La tintelore,
Tout est verlore
Bei Got.

"I am betrayed," said the Duke, who instantly conceived that this chorus, expressing "all is lost," was sung by one of his faithful agents, as a hint to him that their machinations were discovered.

He attempted to throw himself from the carriage, but Chiffinch held him with a firm, though respectful grasp. "Do not destroy yourself, my lord," he said, in a tone of deep humility—"there are soldiers and officers of the peace around the carriage, to enforce your Grace's coming to Whitehall, and to prevent your escape. To attempt it would be to confess guilt; and I advise you strongly against that—the King is your friend—be your own."

The Duke, after a moment's consideration, said sullenly, "I believe you are right. Why should I fly, when I am guilty of nothing but sending some fire-works to entertain the Court, instead of a concert of music?"

"And the dwarf, who came so unexpectedly out of the bass-viol——"

"Was a masking device of my own, Chiffinch," said the Duke, though the circumstance was then first known to him. "Chiffinch, you will bind me for ever, if you will permit me to have a minute's conversation with Christian."

"With Christian, my lord?—Where could you find him?—You are aware we must go straight on to the Court."

"True," said the Duke, "but I think I cannot miss finding him; and you, Master Chiffinch, are no officer, and have no warrant either to detain me prisoner, or prevent my speaking to whom I please."

Chiffinch replied, "My Lord Duke, your genius is so great, and your escapes so numerous, that it will be from no wish of my own if I am forced to hurt a man so skilful and so popular."

"Nay, then, there is life in it yet," said the Duke, and whistled; when, from beside the little cutler's booth, with which the reader is acquainted, appeared, suddenly, Master Christian, and was in a moment at the side of the coach. "*Ganz ist verloren*," said the Duke.

"I know it," said Christian; "and all our godly friends are dispersed upon the news. Lucky the Colonel and these German rascals gave a hint. All is safe—You go to Court.—Hark ye, I will follow."

"You, Christian? that would be more friendly than wise."

"Why, what is there against me?" said Christian. "I am innocent as the child unborn—so is your Grace. There is but one creature who can bear witness to our guilt; but I trust to bring her on the stage in our favour—besides, if I went not, I should presently be sent for."

"The familiar of whom I have heard you speak, I warrant?"

"Hark in your ear again."

"I understand," said the Duke, "and will delay Master Chiffinch,—for he, you must know, is my conductor,—no longer.—Well, Chiffinch, let them drive on.—*Vogue la Galere!*" he exclaimed, as the carriage went onward; "I have sailed through worse perils than this yet."

"It is not for me to judge," said Chiffinch; "your Grace is a bold commander; and Christian hath the cunning of the devil for a pilot; but—— However, I remain your Grace's poor friend, and will heartily rejoice in your extrication."

"Give me a proof of your friendship," said the Duke. "Tell me what you know of Christian's familiar, as he calls her."

"I believe it to be the same dancing wench who came with Empson to my house on the morning that Mistress Alice made her escape from us. But you have seen her, my lord?"

"I?" said the Duke; "when did I see her?"

"She was employed by Christian, I believe, to set his niece at liberty, when he found himself obliged to gratify his fanatical brother-in-law, by restoring his child; besides being prompted by a private desire, as I think, of bantering your Grace."

"Umph! I suspected so much. I will repay it," said the Duke. "But first to get out of this dilemma.—That witch, then, was his familiar; and she joined in the plot to tantalize me?—But here

we reach Whitehall.—Now, Chiffinch, be no worse than thy word, and—now, Buckingham, be thyself!"

But ere we follow Buckingham into the presence, where he had so difficult a part to sustain, it may not be amiss to follow Christian after his brief conversation with the Duke of Buckingham. Upon re-entering the house, which he did by a circuitous passage, leading from a distant alley, and through several courts, Christian hastened to a low matted apartment, in which Bridgenorth sat alone, reading the Bible by the light of a small brazen lamp, with the utmost serenity of countenance.

"Have you dismissed the Peverils?" said Christian, hastily.

"I have," said the Major.

"And upon what pledge—that they will not carry information against you to Whitehall?"

"They gave me their promise voluntarily, when I shewed them our armed friends were dismissed. To-morrow, I believe, it is their purpose to lodge informations."

"And why not to-night, I pray you?" said Christian.

"Because they allow us that time for escape."

"Why, then, do you not avail yourself of it? Wherefore are you here?" said Christian.

"Nay, rather, why do *you* not fly?" said Bridgenorth. "Of a surety, you are as deeply engaged as I."

"Brother Bridgenorth, I am the fox, who knows a hundred modes of deceiving the hounds; you are the deer, whose sole resource is in hasty flight. Therefore lose no time—begone to the country—or rather, Zedekiah Fish's vessel, the Good Hope, lies in the river, bound for Massachussets—take the wings of the morning, and begone—she can fall down to Gravesend with the tide."

"And leave to thee, brother Christian," said Bridgenorth, "the charge of my fortune and my daughter? No, brother; my opinion must be re-established ere I again trust thee."

"Go thy ways, then, for a suspicious fool," said Christian, suppressing his strong desire to use language more offensive; "or rather stay where thou art, and take thy chance of the gallows!"

"It is appointed to all men to die once," said Bridgenorth; "my life hath been a living death. My fairest boughs have been stripped by the axe of the forester—that which survives must, if it shall blossom, be grafted elsewhere, and at a distance from my aged trunk. The sooner, then, the root feels the axe, the stroke is more welcome. I had been pleased, indeed, had I been called to bringing yonder licentious Court to a purer character, and relieving the yoke of the suffering people of God. That youth too—son to that precious woman, to whom I owe the last tie that feebly links my wearied spirit to humanity—could I have travailed with *him* in

the good cause!—But that, with all my other hopes, is broken for ever; and since I am not worthy to be an instrument in so great a work, I have little desire to abide longer in this vale of sorrow."

"Farewell, then, desponding fool!" said Christian, unable, with all his calmness, any longer to suppress his contempt for the resigned and hopeless predestinarian. "That fate should have clogged me with such confederates!" he muttered, as he left the apartment—"this bigotted fool is now nearly irreclaimable—I must to Zarah; for she, or no one, must carry us through those straits. If I can but sooth her sullen temper, and excite her vanity to action,—betwixt her address, the King's partiality for the Duke, Buckingham's matchless effrontery, and my own hand upon the helm, we may yet weather the tempest that darkens around us. But what we do must be hastily done."

In another apartment he found the person he sought—the same who visited the Duke of Buckingham's haram, and, having relieved Alice Bridgenorth from her confinement there, had occupied her place as has been already narrated, or rather intimated. She was now much more plainly attired than when she had tantalized the Duke with her presence; but her dress had still something of the Oriental character, which corresponded with the dark complexion and quick eye of the wearer. She had the kerchief at her eyes as Christian entered

the apartment, but suddenly withdrew it, and, flashing on him a glance of scorn and indignation, asked him what he meant by intruding where his company was alike unsought for and undesired.

"A proper question," said Christian, "from a slave to her master!"

"Rather say, a proper question, and of all questions the most proper, from a mistress to her slave! Know you not, that from the hour in which you discovered your ineffable baseness, you have made me mistress of your lot? While you seemed but a demon of vengeance, you commanded terror, and to good purpose; but such a foul fiend as thou hast of late shewn thyself—such a very worthless, base trickster of the devil—such a sordid grovelling imp of perdition, can gain nothing but scorn from a soul like mine."

"Gallantly mouthed," said Christian, "and with good emphasis."

"Yes," answered Zarah, "I can speak—sometimes—I can also be mute; and that no one knows better than thou."

"Thou art a spoiled child, Zarah, and doest but abuse the indulgence I entertain for your freakish humour," replied Christian; "thy wits have been disturbed since ever you landed in England, and all for the sake of one who cares for thee no more than for the most worthless object who walks the streets,

amongst whom he left you to engage in a brawl for one he loved better."

"It is no matter," said Zarah, obviously repressing very bitter emotion; "it signifies not that he loves another better; there is none—no, none—that ever did, or can, love him so well."

"I pity you, Zarah!" said Christian, with some scorn.

"I deserve your pity," she replied, "were your pity worth my accepting. Whom have I to thank for my wretchedness but you?—You bred me up in thirst of vengeance, ere I knew that good and evil were anything better than names;—to gain your applause, and to gratify the vanity you had excited, I have for years undergone a penance, from which a thousand would have shrunk."

"A thousand, Zarah!" answered Christian; "ay, a hundred thousand, and a million to boot; the creature is not on earth, being mere mortal woman, that would have undergone the thirtieth part of thy self-denial."

"I believe it," said Zarah, drawing up her slight but elegant figure; "I believe it—I have gone through a trial that few indeed could have sustained. I have renounced the dear intercourse of my kind; compelled my tongue only to utter, like that of a spy, the knowledge which my ear had only collected as a base eaves-dropper. This I have done

for years—for years—and all for the sake of your private applause—and the hope of vengeance on a woman, who, if she did ill in murdering my father, has been bitterly repaid by nourishing a serpent in her bosom, that had the tooth, but not the deafened ear, of the adder."

"Well—well—well," reiterated Christian; "and had you not your reward in my approbation—in the consciousness of your own unequalled dexterity—by which, superior to anything of thy sex that history has ever known, you endured what woman never before endured, insolence without notice, admiration without answer, and sarcasm without reply?"

"Not without reply," said Zarah fiercely. "Gave not Nature to my feelings a course of expression more impressive than words? and did not those tremble at my shrieks, who would have little minded my entreaties or my complaints? And my proud lady, who sauced her charities with the taunts she thought I heard not—she was justly paid by the passing of her dearest and most secret concerns into the hands of her mortal enemy; and the vain Earl—yet he was a thing as insignificant as the plume that nodded in his cap;—and the maidens and ladies who taunted me—I had, or can easily have, my revenge upon them. But there is *one*," she added, looking upward, "who never taunted me; one whose generous feelings could treat the

poor dumb girl even as his sister; who never spoke word of her but it was to excuse or defend—and you tell me I must not love him, and that it is madness to love him!—I *will* be mad then, for I will love him till the latest breath of my life!"

"Think but an instant, silly girl—silly but in one respect, since in all others thou mayest brave the world of women. Think that I have proposed to thee, for the loss of this hopeless affection, a career so brilliant!—Think only that it rests with thyself to be the wife—the wedded wife—of the princely Buckingham! With my talents—with thy wit and beauty—with his passionate love of these attributes—a short space might rank you among England's princesses.—Be but guided by me—he is now at a deadly pass—needs every assistance to retrieve his fortunes—above all, that which we alone can render him. Put yourself under my conduct, and not fate itself shall prevent your wearing a Duchess's coronet."

"A coronet of thistle-down, entwined with thistle-leaves," said Zarah.—"I know not a slighter thing than your Buckingham! I saw him at your request—saw him when, as a man, he should have shewn himself generous and noble—I stood the proof at your desire, for I laugh at those dangers from which the poor blushing wailers of my sex shrink and withdraw themselves. What did I find him?—a poor wavering voluptuary—his nearest

attempt to passion like the fire on a wretched stubble-field, that may singe, indeed, or smoke, but can neither warm nor devour. Christian! were his coronet at my feet this moment, I would sooner lift a crown of gilded gingerbread, than extend my hand to raise it."

"You are mad, Zarah—with all your taste and talent, you are utterly mad! But let Buckingham pass—Do you owe *me* nothing on this emergency? —Nothing to one who rescued you from the cruelty of your owner, the posture-master, to place you in ease and affluence?"

"Christian," she replied, "I owe you much. Had I not felt I did so, I would, as I have been often tempted to do, have denounced thee to the fierce Countess, who would have gibbetted you on the feudal walls of Castle-Rushin, and bid your heirs seek redress from the eagles, that would long since have thatched their nest with your hair, and fed their young ospreys with your flesh."

"I am truly glad you have had so much forbearance for me," answered Christian.

"I have it, in truth and in sincerity," replied Zarah—"Not for your benefits to me—such as they were, they were every one selfish, and conferred from the most selfish considerations. I have overpaid them a thousand times by the devotion to your will, which I have displayed at the greatest personal risk. But till of late, I respected your powers

of mind—your inimitable command of passion—the force of intellect which I have ever seen you exercise over all others, from the bigot Bridgenorth to the debauched Buckingham—in that, indeed, I have recognized my master."

"And those powers," said Christian, "are unlimited as ever; and with thy assistance, thou shalt see the strongest meshes that the laws of civil society ever wove to limit the natural dignity of man, broke asunder like a spider's web."

She paused, and answered, "While a noble motive fired thee—ay, a noble motive, though irregular—for I was born to gaze on the sun which the pale daughters of Europe shrink from—I could serve thee—I could have followed, while revenge or ambition had guided thee—but love of *wealth*, and by what means acquired!—What sympathy can I hold with that?—Wouldst thou not have pandered to the lust of the King, though the object was thine own orphan niece?—You smile?—Smile again when I ask you whether you meant not my own prostitution, when you charged me to remain in the house of that wretched Buckingham?—Smile at that question, and by Heaven I stab you to the heart!" And she thrust her hand into her bosom, and partly shewed the hilt of a small poniard.

"And if I smile," said Christian, "it is but in scorn of so odious an accusation. Girl, I will not

tell thee the reason, but there exists not on earth the living thing over whose safety and honour I would keep watch as over thine. Buckingham's wife, indeed, I wished thee; and, through thy own beauty and thy wit, I doubted not to bring the match to pass."

"Vain flatterer," said Zarah, yet seeming soothed even by the flattery which she scoffed at, "you would persuade me that it was honourable love which you expected the Duke was to have offered me. How durst you urge so gross a deception, to which time, place, and circumstance, gave the lie? —How dare you now again mention it, when you well know, that at the time you mention, the Duchess was still in life?"

"In life, but on her death-bed," said Christian; "and for time, place, and circumstance, had your virtue, my Zarah, depended on these, how couldst thou have been the creature thou art? I knew thee all-sufficient to bid him defiance—else—for thou art dearer to me than thou thinkest—I had not risked thee to win the Duke of Buckingham; ay, and the kingdom of England to boot.—So now, wilt thou be ruled and go on with me?"

Zarah, or Fenella, for our readers must have been long aware of the identity of these two personages, cast down her eyes, and was silent for a long time. "Christian," she said at last, in a solemn voice, "if my ideas of right and of wrong be

wild and incoherent, I owe it, first, to the wild fever which my native sun communicated to my veins; next, to my childhood, trained amidst the shifts, tricks, and feats of jugglers and mountebanks; and then, to a youth of fraud and deception, through the course thou didst prescribe me, in which I might, indeed, hear everything, but communicate with no one. The last cause of my wild errors, if such they are, originates, O Christian, with you alone; by whose intrigues I was placed with yonder lady, and who taught me, that to revenge my father's death, was my first great duty on earth, and that I was bound by nature to hate and injure her by whom I was fed and fostered, though as she would have fed and caressed a dog, or any other mute animal. I also think, for I will deal fairly with you, that you had not so easily detected your niece, in the child whose surprising agility was making yonder brutal mountebank's fortune; nor so readily induced him to part with his bond-slave, had you not, for your own purposes, placed me under his charge, and reserved the privilege of claiming me when you pleased. I could not, under any other tuition, have identified myself with the personage of a mute, which it has been your desire that I should perform through life."

"You do me injustice, Zarah," said Christian—"I found you capable of discharging, to an uncommon degree, a task necessary to the avenging of

your father's death—I consecrated you to it, as I consecrated my own life and hopes; and you held the duty sacred, till these mad feelings towards a youth who loves your cousin——"

"Who—loves—my—cousin," repeated Zarah, (for we will continue to call her by her real name,) slowly, and as if the words dropped unconsciously from her lips. "Well—be it so!—Man of many wiles, I will follow thy course for a little, a very little farther; but take heed—teaze me not with remonstrances against the treasure of my secret thoughts—I mean my most hopeless affection to Julian Peveril—and bring me not as an assistant to any snare which you may design to cast around him. You and your Duke shall rue the hour most bitterly, in which you provoke me. You may suppose you have me in your power; but remember the snakes of my burning climate are never so fatal as when you grasp them."

"I care not for these Peverils," said Christian—"I care not for their fate a poor straw, unless where it bears on that of the destined woman, whose hands are red in your father's blood. Believe me, I can divide her fate and theirs. I will explain to you how. And for the Duke, he may pass among men of the town for wit, and among soldiers for valour, among courtiers for manners and for form; and why, with his high rank and immense fortune, you

should throw away an opportunity, which, as I could now improve it——"

"Speak not of it," said Zarah, "if thou would'st have our truce—remember it is no peace—if, I say, thou would'st have our truce grow to be an hour old!"

"This, then," said Christian, with a last effort to work upon the vanity of this singular being, "is she who pretended such superiority to human passion, that she could walk indifferently and unmoved through the halls of the prosperous, and the prison cells of the captive, unknowing and unknown—sympathizing neither with the pleasures of the one, nor the woes of the other, but advancing with sure, though silent steps, her own plans, in despite and regardless of either!"

"My own plans!" said Zarah—"*Thy* plans, Christian—thy plans of extorting from the surprised prisoners means whereby to convict them—thine own plans, formed with those more powerful than thyself, to sound men's secrets, and, by using them as matter of accusation, to keep up the great delusion of the nation."

"Such access was indeed given you as my agent," said Christian, "and for advancing a great national change. But how did you use it?—to advance your own insane passion."

"Insane!" said Zarah—"Had he been less than

insane whom I addressed, he and I had ere now been far from the toils which you have pitched for us both. I had means prepared for everything; and ere this, the shores of Britain had been lost to our sight for ever."

"The miserable dwarf, too," said Christian—"Was it worthy of you to delude that poor creature with flattering visions—lull him asleep with drugs? Was *that* my doing?"

"He was my destined tool," said Zarah, haughtily. "I remembered your lessons too well not to use him as such. Yet scorn him not too much. I tell you, that yon very miserable dwarf, whom I made my sport in the prison,—yon wretched abortion of nature, I would select for a husband, ere I would marry your Buckingham;—the vain and imbecile pigmy has yet the warm heart and noble feelings, that a man should hold his highest honour."

"In God's name, then, take your own way," said Christian; "and, for my sake, let never man hereafter limit a woman in the use of her tongue, since he must make it amply up to her, in allowing her the privilege of her own will. Who would have thought it? But the colt has slipped the bridle, and I must needs follow, since I cannot guide her."

Our narrative returns to the Court of King Charles, at Whitehall.

CHAP. VII.

——— But O!
What shall I say to thee, Lord Scroop; thou cruel,
Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,
That almost might'st have coin'd me into gold,
Would'st thou have practis'd on me for thy use?
Henry V.

At no period of his life, not even when that life was in eminent danger, did the constitutional gaiety of Charles seem more overclouded, than when waiting for the return of Chiffinch with the Duke of Buckingham. His mind revolted at the idea, that the person to whom he had been so particularly indulgent, and whom he had selected as the friend of his lighter hours and amusements, should prove capable of having tampered with a plot apparently directed against his liberty and life. He more than once examined the dwarf anew, but could extract nothing more than his first narrative contained. The apparition of the female to him in the cell of Newgate, he described in such fanciful and romantic colours, that the King could not help thinking

the poor man's head a little turned; and, as nothing was found in the kettledrum, and other musical instruments brought for the use of the Duke's band of foreigners, he nourished some slight hope that the whole plan might be either a mere jest, or that the idea of an actual conspiracy was founded in mistake.

The persons who had been dispatched to watch the motions of Mr Weiver's congregation, brought back word that they had quietly dispersed. It was known, at the same time, that they had met in arms, but this augured no particular design of aggression, at a time when all true Protestants conceived themselves in danger of immediate massacre; when the fathers of the city had repeatedly called out the Train-Bands, and alarmed the citizens of London, under the idea of an instant insurrection of the Catholics; and when, to sum the whole up, in the emphatic words of an alderman of the day, there was a general belief that they would all awaken some unhappy morning with their throats cut. Who was to do these dire deeds, it was more difficult to suppose; but all admitted the possibility that they might be achieved, since one Justice of the Peace was already murdered. There was, therefore, no inference of hostile intentions against the State, to be decidedly derived from a congregation of Protestants *par excellence*, military from old as-

sociations, bringing their arms with them to a place of worship, in the midst of a panic so universal.

Neither did the violent language of the minister, supposing that to be proved, absolutely infer meditated violence. The favourite parables of the preachers, and the metaphors and ornaments which they selected, were at all times of a military cast; and the taking the kingdom of heaven by storm, a strong and beautiful metaphor, when used generally, as in Scripture, was detailed in their sermons in all the technical language of the attack and defence of a fortified place. The danger, in short, whatever might have been its actual degree, had disappeared as suddenly as a bubble upon the water, when broken by a casual touch, and had left as little trace behind it. It became, therefore, matter of much doubt, whether it had ever actually existed.

While various reports were making from without, and while their tenor was discussed by the King, and such nobles and statesmen as he thought proper to consult on the occasion, a gradual sadness and anxiety mingled with, and finally silenced, the mirth of the evening. All became sensible that something unusual was going forward; and the unwonted distance which Charles maintained from his guests, while it added greatly to the dulness that began to predominate in the presence-chamber,

gave intimation that something unusual was labouring in the King's mind.

Thus play was neglected—the music was silent, or played without being heard—gallants ceased to make compliments, and ladies to expect them; and a sort of apprehensive curiosity pervaded the circle. Each asked the others why they were grave; and no answer was returned, any more than could have been rendered by a herd of cattle instinctively disturbed by the approach of a thunder-storm.

To add to the general apprehension, it began to be whispered, that one or two of the guests, who were desirous of leaving the palace, had been informed no one could be permitted to retire until the general hour of dismissal. And these, gliding back into the hall, communicated in whispers that the sentinels at the gate were doubled, and that there was a troop of the Horse Guards drawn up in the court—circumstances so unusual, as to excite the most anxious curiosity.

Such was the state of the Court, when wheels were heard without, and the bustle which took place denoted the arrival of some person of consequence.

"Here comes Chiffinch," said the King, "with his prey in his clutch."

It was indeed the Duke of Buckingham; nor did he approach the royal presence without emotion. On entering the court, the flambeaux which were

borne around the carriage gleamed on the scarlet coats, laced hats, and drawn broadswords of the Horse Guards—a sight unusual, and calculated to strike terror into a conscience which was none of the clearest.

The Duke alighted from the carriage, and only said to the officer, whom he saw upon duty, "You are late under arms to-night, Captain Carleton."

"Such are our orders, sir," answered Carleton, with military brevity; and then commanded the four dismounted sentinels at the under gate to make way for the Duke of Buckingham. His Grace had no sooner entered, than he heard behind him the command, "Move close up, sentinels—closer yet to the gate." And he felt as if all chance of rescue were excluded by the sound.

As he advanced up the grand stair-case, there were other symptoms of alarm and precaution. The Yeomen of the Guard were mustered in unusual numbers, and carried carabines instead of their halberts; and the Gentlemen Pensioners, with their partizans, appeared also in proportional force. In short, all that sort of defence which the royal household possesses within itself, seemed, for some hasty and urgent reason, to have been placed under arms, and upon duty.

Buckingham ascended the royal stair-case with an eye attentive to these preparations, and a step steady and slow, as if he counted each step on

which he trod. "Who," he asked himself, "shall insure Christian's fidelity? Let him but stand fast, and we are secure. Otherwise——"

As he shaped the alternative, he entered the presence-chamber.

The King stood in the midst of the apartment, surrounded by the personages with whom he had been consulting. The rest of the brilliant assembly, scattered into groups, looked on at some distance. All were silent when Buckingham entered, in hopes of receiving some explanation of the mysteries of the evening. All bent forward, though etiquette forbade them to advance, to catch, if possible, something of what was about to pass betwixt the King and his intriguing statesman. At the same time, those counsellors who stood around Charles, drew back on either side, so as to permit the Duke to pay his respects to his Majesty in the usual form. He went through the ceremonial with his accustomed grace, but was received by Charles with much unwonted gravity.

"We have waited for you for some time, my Lord Duke. It is long since Chiffinch left us, to request your attendance here. I see you are elaborately dressed. Your toilette was needless on the present occasion."

"Needless to the splendour of your Majesty's Court," said the Duke, "but not needless on my

part. This chanced to be Black Monday at York Place, and my club of *Pendables* were in full glee when your Majesty's summons arrived. I could not be in the company of Ogle, Maniduc, Dawson, and so forth, but what I must needs make some preparation, and some ablution, ere entering the circle here."

"I trust the purification will be complete," said the King, without any tendency to the smile which always softened features, that, ungilded by its influence, were dark, harsh, and even severe. "We wished to ask your Grace concerning the import of a sort of musical mask which you designed us here, but which miscarried, as we are given to understand."

"It must have been a great miscarriage indeed," said the Duke, "since your Majesty looks so serious on it. I thought to have done your Majesty a pleasure, (as I have seen you condescend to be pleased with such passages,) by sending the contents of that bass-viol; but I fear the jest has been unacceptable—I fear the fire-works may have done mischief."

"Not the mischief they were designed for, perhaps," said the King, gravely; "you see, my lord, we are all alive, and unsinged."

"Long may your Majesty remain so," said the Duke; "yet I see that there is something miscon-

strued on my part—it must be a matter unpardonable, however little intended, since it hath displeased so indulgent a master."

"Too indulgent a master, indeed, Buckingham," replied the King; "and the fruit of my indulgence has been to change loyal men into traitors."

"May it please your Majesty, I cannot understand this," said the Duke.

"Follow us, my lord," answered Charles, "and we will endeavour to explain our meaning."

Attended by the same lords who stood around him, and followed by the Duke of Buckingham, on whom all eyes were fixed, Charles retired into the same cabinet which had been the scene of repeated consultations in the course of the evening. There, leaning with his arms crossed on the back of an easy chair, Charles proceeded to interrogate the suspected nobleman.

"Let us be plain with each other. Speak out, Buckingham. What, in one word, was to have been the regale intended for us this evening?"

"A petty mask, my lord. I had destined a little dancing-girl to come out of that instrument, who, I thought, would have performed to your Majesty's liking—a few Chinese fire-works there were, which, thinking the entertainment was to have taken place in the marble hall, might, I hoped, have been discharged with good effect, and without the slightest alarm, at the first appearance of my little sorceress,

and were designed to have masked, as it were, her entrance upon the stage. I hope there have been no peruques singed—no ladies frightened—no hopes of noble descent interrupted by my ill-fancied jest?"

"We have seen no such fire-works, my lord; and your female dancer, of whom we now hear for the first time, came forth in the form of our old acquaintance Geoffrey Hudson, whose dancing days are surely ended."

"Your Majesty surprises me! I beseech you, let Christian be sent for—Edward Christian—he will be found lodging in a large old house near Sharper the cutler's, in the Strand. As I live by bread, sire, I trusted him with the arrangement of this matter, as indeed the dancing-girl was his property. If he has done aught to dishonour my concert, or disparage my character, he shall die under the baton."

"It is singular," said the King, "and I have often observed it, that this fellow Christian bears the blame of all men's enormities—he performs the part which, in a great family, is usually assigned to that mischief-doing personage, Nobody. When Chiffinch blunders, he always quotes Christian. When Sheffield writes a lampoon, I am sure to hear of Christian having corrected, or copied, or dispersed it—he is the *ame damnée* of every one about my Court—the scape-goat, who is to carry away all their iniquities; and he will have a cruel load to

bear into the wilderness. But for Buckingham's sins, in particular, he is the regular and uniform sponsor; and I am convinced his Grace expects Christian should suffer every penalty which he has incurred in this world or the next."

"Not so," with the deepest reverence replied the Duke. "I have no hope of being either hanged or damned by proxy; but it is clear some one hath tampered with and altered my device. If I am accused of aught, let me at least hear the charge, and see my accuser."

"That is but fair," said the King. "Bring our little friend from behind the chimney-board. [Hudson being accordingly produced, he continued.] There stands the Duke of Buckingham. Repeat before him the tale you told us. Let him hear what were those contents of the bass-viol, which were removed that you might enter it. Be not afraid of any one, but speak the truth boldly."

"May it please your Majesty," said Hudson, "fear is a thing unknown to me."

"His body has no room to hold such a passion; or there is too little of it to be worth fearing for," said Buckingham.—"But let him speak."

Ere Hudson had completed his tale, Buckingham interrupted him by exclaiming, "Is it possible that I can be suspected by your Majesty on the word of this pitiful variety of the baboon tribe?"

"Villain-Lord, I appeal thee to the combat!"

said the little man, highly offended at the appellation thus bestowed on him.

"La you there now!" said the Duke—"The little animal is quite crazed, and defies a man who need ask no other weapon than a corking-pin to run him through the lungs, and whose single kick could hoist him from Dover to Calais without yacht or wherry. And what can you expect from an idiot, who is *engoné* of a common dancing-girl, that capered on a pack-thread at Ghent in Flanders, unless they were to club their talents to set up a booth at Bartholomew-Fair?—Is it not plain, that supposing the little animal is not malicious, as indeed his whole kind bear a general and most cankered malice against those who have the ordinary proportions of humanity—Grant, I say, that this were not a malicious falsehood of his, why, what does it amount to?—That he has mistaken squibs and Chinese crackers for arms! He says not he himself touched or handled them; and judging by the sight alone, I question if the infirm old creature, when any whim or preconception hath possession of his noddle, can distinguish betwixt a blunderbuss and a black pudding."

The horrible clamour which the dwarf made so soon as he heard this disparagement of his military skill—the haste with which he blundered out a detail of his warlike experiences—and the absurd grimaces which he made in order to enforce his story,

provoked not only the risibility of Charles, but even of the statesmen around him, and added absurdity to the motley complexion of the scene. The King terminated this dispute, by commanding the dwarf to withdraw.

A more regular discussion of his evidence was then resumed, and Ormond was the first who pointed out, that it went farther than had been noticed, since the little man had mentioned a certain extraordinary and treasonable conversation held by the Duke's dependents, by whom he had been conveyed to the palace.

"I am sure not to lack my lord of Ormond's good word," said the Duke, scornfully; "but I defy him alike, and all my other enemies, and shall find it easy to shew that this alleged conspiracy, if any grounds for it at all exist, is a mere sham-plot, got up to turn the odium justly attached to the Papists upon the Protestants. Here is a half-hanged creature, who, on the very day he escapes from the gallows, which many believe was his most deserved destiny, comes to take away the reputation of a Protestant Peer—and, on what?—on the treasonable conversation of three or four German fiddlers, heard through the sound-holes of a violoncello, and that, too, when the creature was incased in it, and mounted on a man's shoulders! The urchin, too, in repeating their language, shews he understands German as little as my horse does; and if he did

rightly hear, truly comprehend, and accurately report what they said, still is my honour to be touched by the language held by such persons as these are, with whom I have never communicated, otherwise than men do with those of their calling and capacity?—Pardon me, sire, if I presume to say, that the profound statesmen who endeavoured to stifle the Popish conspiracy by the pretended Meal-tub Plot, will take little more credit by their figments about fiddles and concertos."

The assistant counsellors looked at each other; and Charles turned on his heel, and walked through the room with long steps.

At this period the Peverils, father and son, were announced to have reached the palace, and were ordered into the royal presence.

These gentlemen had received the royal mandate at a moment of great interest. After being dismissed from their confinement by the elder Bridgenorth, in the manner and upon the terms which the reader must have gathered from the conversation of the latter with Christian, they reached the lodgings of Lady Peveril, who awaited them with joy, mingled with terror and uncertainty. The news of the acquittal had reached her by the exertions of the faithful Lance Outram, but her mind had been since harassed by the long delay of their appearance, and rumours of disturbances which had taken place in Fleet-Street and in the Strand.

When the first rapturous meeting was over, Lady Peveril, with an anxious look towards her son, as if recommending caution, said she was now about to present to him the daughter of an old friend, whom he had *never* (there was an emphasis on the word) seen before. "This young lady," she continued, "was the only child of Colonel Mitford, in North Wales, who had sent her to remain under her guardianship for an interval, finding himself unequal to attempt the task of her education."

"Ay, ay," said Sir Geoffrey, "Dick Mitford must be old now—beyond the threescore and ten, I think. He was no chicken, though a cock of the game, when he joined the Marquis of Hertford at Namptwich with two hundred wild Welchmen.—Before George, Julian, I love that girl as if she was my own flesh and blood! Lady Peveril would never have got through this work without her; and Dick Mitford sent me a thousand pieces, too, in excellent time, when there was scarce a cross to keep the devil from dancing in our pockets, much more for these law-doings. I used it without scruple, for there is wood ready to be cut at Martindale when we get down there, and Dick Mitford knows I would have done the like for him. Strange that he should have been the only one of my friends to reflect I might want a few pieces."

Whilst Sir Geoffrey thus run on, the meeting betwixt Alice and Julian Peveril was accomplish-

ed, without any particular notice on his side, except to say, " Kiss her, Julian—kiss her. What the devil! is that the way you learned to accost a lady at the Isle of Man, as if her lips were a red-hot horse-shoe?—And do not you be offended, my pretty one; Julian is naturally bashful, and has been bred by an old lady, but you will find him, by and by, as gallant as thou hast found me, my princess.—And now, Dame Peveril, to dinner, to dinner!—the old fox must have his belly-timber, though the hounds have been after him the whole day."

Lance, whose joyous congratulations were next to be undergone, had the consideration to cut them short, in order to provide a plain but hearty meal from the next cook's-shop, at which Julian sat like one enchanted, betwixt his mistress and his mother. He easily conceived that the last was the confidential friend to whom Bridgenorth had finally committed the charge of his daughter, and his only anxiety now was, to anticipate the confusion that was likely to arise when her real parentage was made known to his father. Wisely, however, he suffered not these anticipations to interfere with the delight of his present situation, in the course of which, many slight but delightful tokens of recognition were exchanged, without censure, under the eye of Lady Peveril, under cover of the boisterous mirth of the old Baronet, who spoke for

two, ate for four, and drank wine for half a dozen. His progress in the latter exercise might have proceeded rather too far, had he not been interrupted by a gentleman bearing the King's orders, that he should instantly attend upon the presence at Whitehall, and bring his son along with him.

Lady Peveril was alarmed, and Alice grew pale with sympathetic anxiety; but the old Knight, who never saw more than what lay straight before him, set it down to the King's hasty anxiety to congratulate him on his escape; an interest on his Majesty's part which he considered by no means extravagant, conscious that it was reciprocal on his own side. It came upon him, indeed, with the more joyful surprise, that he had received a previous hint, ere he left the court of justice, that it would be prudent in him to go down to Martindale before presenting himself at Court,—a restriction which he supposed as repugnant to his Majesty's feelings as it was to his own.

While he consulted with Lance Outram about cleaning his buff-belt and sword-hilt, as well as time admitted, Lady Peveril had the means to give Julian more distinct information, that Alice was under her protection by her father's authority, and with his consent to their union, if it could be accomplished. She added, that it was her determination to employ the mediation of the Countess of Derby, to overcome the obstacles which might be foreseen on the part of Sir Geoffrey.

CHAP. VIII.

In the King's name,
Let fall your swords and daggers!
Critic.

WHEN the father and son entered the cabinet of audience, it was easily visible that Sir Geoffrey had obeyed the summons as he would have done the trumpet's call to horse; and his dishevelled gray locks and half-arranged dress, though they shewed zeal and haste, such as he would have used when Charles I. called him to attend a council of war, seemed rather indecorous in a pacific drawing-room. He paused at the door of the cabinet, but when the King called on him to advance, came hastily forward, with every feeling of his earlier and later life afloat and contending in his memory, threw himself on his knees before the King, seized his hand, and, without even an effort to speak, wept aloud. Charles, who generally felt deeply so long as an impressive object was before his eyes, indulged for a moment the old man's rapture.—"My good Sir Geoffrey," he said, "you have had

some hard measure; we owe you amends, and will find time to pay our debt."

"No suffering—no debt," said the old man; "I cared not what the rogues said of me—I knew they could never get twelve honest fellows to believe a word of their most damnable lies. I did long to beat them when they called me traitor to your Majesty—that I confess—But to have such an early opportunity of paying my duty to your Majesty overpays it all. The villains would have persuaded me I ought not to come to Court—aha!"

The Duke of Ormond perceived that the King coloured much; for in truth it was from the Court that the private intimation had been given to Sir Geoffrey to go down to the country, without appearing at Whitehall; and he, moreover, suspected that the jolly old Knight had not risen from his dinner altogether dry-lipped, after the fatigues of a day so agitating.—"My old friend," he whispered, "you forget that your son is to be presented—permit me to have that honour."

"I crave your Grace's pardon humbly," said Sir Geoffrey, "but it is an honour I design for myself, as I apprehend no one can so utterly surrender and deliver him up to his Majesty's service as the father that begot him is entitled to do.—Julian, come forward, and kneel.—Here he is, please your Majesty—Julian Peveril—a chip of the old block—as stout, though scarce so tall a tree, as the old

trunk when at the freshest. Take him to you, sir, for a faithful servant, *a vendre et a pendre*, as the French say; if he fears fire or steel, axe or gallows, in your Majesty's service, I renounce him—he is no son of mine—I disown him, and he may go to the Isle of Man, the Isle of Dogs, or the Isle of Devils, for what I care."

Charles winked to Ormond, and having, with his wonted courtesy, expressed his thorough conviction that Julian would imitate the loyalty of his ancestors, and especially of his father, added, that he believed his Grace of Ormond had something to communicate which was of consequence to his service. Sir Geoffrey made his military reverence at this hint, and marched off in the rear of the Duke, who proceeded to inquire at him concerning the events of the day. Charles, in the meanwhile, having, in the first place, ascertained that the son was not in the same genial condition with the father, demanded and received from him a precise account of all the proceedings subsequent to the trial.

Julian, with the plainness and precision which such a subject demanded, when treated in such a presence, narrated all that had happened, down to the entrance of Bridgenorth; and his Majesty was so much pleased with his manner, that he congratulated Arlington on their having gained the evidence of at least one man of sense to these dark and mysterious events. But when Bridgenorth was

brought upon the scene, Julian hesitated to bestow a name upon him; and although he mentioned the chapel which he had seen filled with men in arms, and the violent language of the preacher, he added, with earnestness, that notwithstanding all this, the men departed without coming to any extremity, and had all left the place before his father and he were set at liberty.

" And you retired quietly to your dinner in Fleet-street, young man," said the King, severely, " without giving a magistrate notice of the dangerous meeting which was held in the vicinity of our palace, and who did not conceal their intention of proceeding to extremities ?"

Peveril blushed and was silent. The King frowned, and stepped aside to communicate with Ormond, who reported that the father seemed to have known nothing of the matter.

" And the son, I am sorry to say," said the King, " seems more unwilling to speak the truth than I should have expected. We have all variety of evidence in this singular investigation—a mad witness like the dwarf, a drunken witness like the father, and now a dumb witness.—Young man," he continued, addressing Julian, " your behaviour is less frank than I expected from your father's son. I must know who this person is with whom you held such familiar intercourse—you know him, I presume ?"

Julian acknowledged that he did, but, kneeling on one knee, entreated his Majesty's forgiveness for concealing his name; "he had been freed," he said, "from his confinement, on promising to that effect."

"That was a promise made, by your own account, under compulsion," answered the King, "and I cannot authorize your keeping it; it is your duty to speak the truth—if you are afraid of Buckingham, the Duke shall withdraw."

"I have no reason to fear the Duke of Buckingham," said Peveril; "that I had an affair with one of his household was the man's own fault, and not mine."

"Oddsfish!" said the King, "the light begins to break in on me—I thought I remembered thy physiognomy. Wert thou not the very fellow whom I met at Chiffinch's yonder morning?—The matter escaped me since; but now I recollect thou saidst then, that thou wert the son of that jolly old three-bottle Baronet yonder."

"It is true," said Julian, "that I met your Majesty at Master Chiffinch's, and I am afraid had the misfortune to displease you; but——"

"No more of that, young man—no more of that—But I recollect you had with you that beautiful dancing syren.—Buckingham, I will hold you gold to silver, that she was the intended tenant of that bass-fiddle?"

"Your Majesty has rightly guessed it," said the Duke; "and I suspect she has put a trick upon me, by substituting the dwarf in her place; for Christian thinks——"

"Damn Christian! said the King hastily—"I wish they would bring him hither, that universal referee."—And as the wish was uttered, Christian's arrival was announced. "Let him attend," said the King: "But hark—a thought strikes me.—Here, Master Peveril—yonder dancing maiden, that introduced you to us by the singular agility of her performance, is she not, by your account, a dependant on the Countess of Derby?"

"I have known her such for years," answered Julian.

"Then will we call the Countess hither," said the King: "It is fit we should learn who this little fairy really is; and if she be now so absolutely at the beck of Buckingham, and this Master Christian of his—why, I think it would be but charity to let her ladyship know so much, since I question if she will wish, in that case, to retain her in her service. Besides," he continued, speaking apart, "this Julian, to whom suspicion attaches in these matters from his obstinate silence, is also of the Countess's household. We will sift this matter to the bottom, and do justice to all."

The Countess of Derby, hastily summoned, entered the royal closet at one door, just as Christian

and Zarah, or Fenella, were ushered in by the other. The old Knight of Martindale, who had ere this returned to the presence, was scarce controlled, even by the signs which she made, so much was he desirous of greeting his old friend; but as Ormond laid a kind restraining hand upon his arm, he was prevailed on to sit still.

The Countess, after a deep reverence to the King, acknowledged the rest of the nobility present by a slighter reverence, smiled to Julian Peveril, and looked with surprise at the unexpected apparition of Fenella. Buckingham bit his lip, for he saw the introduction of Lady Derby was likely to confuse and embroil every preparation which he had arranged for his defence; and he stole a glance at Christian, whose eye, when fixed on the Countess, assumed the deadly sharpness which sparkles in the adder's, while his cheek grew almost black under the influence of strong emotion.

"Is there any one in this presence whom your Ladyship recognizes," said the King, graciously, "besides your old friends of Ormond and Arlington?"

"I see, my Liege, two worthy friends of my husband's house," replied the Countess; "Sir Geoffrey Peveril and his son—the latter a distinguished member of my son's household."

"Any one else?" continued the King.

"An unfortunate female of my family, who dis-

appeared from the Island of Man at the same time when Julian Peveril left it upon business of importance. She was thought to have fallen from the cliff into the sea."

"Had your ladyship any reason to suspect—pardon me," said the King, "for putting such a question—any improper intimacy between Master Peveril and this same female attendant?"

"My Liege," said the Countess, colouring indignantly, "my household is of reputation."

"Nay, my lady, be not angry," said the King; "I did but ask—such things will befal in the best-regulated families."

"Not in mine, Sire," said the Countess. "Besides that, in common pride and in common honesty, Julian Peveril is incapable of intriguing with an unhappy creature, removed by her misfortune almost beyond the limits of humanity."

Zarah looked at her, and compressed her lips, as if to keep in the words that would fain break from them.

"I know not how it is," said the King—"What your ladyship says may be true in the main, yet men's tastes have strange vagaries. This girl is lost in Man so soon as the youth leaves it, and is found in Saint James's Park, bouncing and dancing like a fairy, so soon as he appears in London."

"Impossible!" said the Countess; "she cannot dance."

"I suspect," said the King, "she can do more feats than your ladyship either knows or would approve of."

The Countess drew up, and was indignantly silent.

The King proceeded—"No sooner is Peveril in Newgate, than, by the account of the venerable little gentleman, this merry maiden is even there. Now, without inquiring how she got in, I think charitably that she had better taste than to come there on the dwarf's account.—Ah ha! I think Master Julian is touched in conscience!"

Julian did indeed start as the King spoke, for it reminded him of the midnight visit in his cell.

The King looked fixedly at him, and then proceeded—"Well, gentlemen, Peveril is carried to his trial, and is no sooner at liberty, than we find him in the house where the Duke of Buckingham was arranging what he calls a musical mask.—Egad, I hold it next to certain, that this wench put the change on his Grace, and popt the poor dwarf into the bass-viol, reserving her own more precious hours to be spent with Master Julian Peveril.—Think you not so, Sir Christian, you, the universal referee? Is there any truth in this conjecture?"

Christian stole a glance on Zarah, and read that in her eye which embarrassed him. "He did not know," he said; "he had indeed engaged this unrivalled performer to take the proposed part in the

mask; and she was to have come forth in the midst of a shower of lambent fire, very artificially prepared with perfumes, to overcome the smell of the powder; but he knew not why—excepting that she was wilful and capricious, like all great geniuses, —she had certainly spoiled the concert by cramming in that more bulky dwarf."

"I should like," said the King, "to see this little maiden stand forth, and bear witness, in such manner as she can express herself, on this mysterious matter. Can any one here understand her mode of communication?"

Christain said, he knew something of it since he had become acquainted with her in London. The Countess spoke not till the King asked her, and then owned dryly, that she had necessarily some habitual means of intercourse with one who had been immediately about her person for so many years.

"I should think," said Charles, "that this same Master Julian Peveril has the more direct key to her language, after all we have heard."

The King looked first at Peveril, who blushed like a maiden at the inference which the King's remark implied, and then suddenly turned his eyes on the supposed mute, on whose cheek a faint colour was dying away. A moment afterwards, at a signal from the Countess, Fenella, or Zarah, stepped forward, and having kneeled down and kissed

her Lady's hand, stood with her arms folded on her breast, with an humble air, as different from that which she wore in the haram of the Duke of Buckingham, as that of a Magdalen from a Judith. Yet this was the least show of her talent of versatility, for so well did she play the part of the dumb girl, that Buckingham, sharp as his discernment was, remained undecided whether the creature which stood before him could possibly be the same with her, who had, in a different dress, made such an impression on his imagination, or indeed was the imperfect creature she now represented. She had at once all that could mark the imperfection of hearing, and all that could shew the wonderful address by which nature so often makes up for the deficiency. There was the lip that trembled not at any sound—the seeming insensibility to the conversation which passed around; while, on the other hand, was the quick and vivid glance, that seemed anxious to devour the meaning of those sounds, which she could gather no otherwise than by the motion of the lips.

Examined after her own fashion, Zarah confirmed the tale of Christian in all its points, and admitted that she had deranged the project laid for a mask, by placing the dwarf in her own stead; the cause of her doing so she declined to assign, and the Countess pressed her no farther.

"Everything tells to exculpate my Lord of

Buckingham," said Charles, " from so absurd an accusation : the dwarf's testimony is too fantastic, that of the two Peverils does not in the least affect the Duke ; that of the dumb damsel completely contradicts the possibility of his guilt. Methinks, my lords, we should acquaint him that he stands acquitted of a complaint, too ridiculous to have ever been subjected to a more serious scrutiny than we have hastily made upon this occasion."

Arlington bowed in acquiescence, but Ormond spoke plainly.—" I should suffer, sire, in the opinion of the Duke of Buckingham, brilliant as his talents are known to be, should I say that I am satisfied in my own mind on this occasion. But I subscribe to the spirit of the times ; and I agree it would be highly dangerous, on such accusations as we have been able to collect, to impeach the character of a zealous Protestant like his Grace— Had he been a Catholic, under such circumstances of suspicion, the Tower had been too good a prison for him."

Buckingham bowed to the Duke of Ormond, with a meaning which even his triumph could not disguise.—" *Tu me la pagherai !*" he muttered, in a tone of deep and abiding resentment ; but the stout old Irishman, who had already braved his utmost wrath, cared little for this expression of his displeasure.

The King then, signing to the other nobles to

pass into the public apartments, stopped Buckingham as he was about to follow them; and, when they were alone, asked, with a significant tone, which brought all the blood in the Duke's veins into his countenance, "When was it, George, that your useful friend Colonel Blood became a musician?—You are silent," he said; "do not deny the charge, for yonder villain, once seen, is remembered for ever. Down, down on your knees, George, and acknowledge that you have abused my easy temper.—Seek for no apology—none will serve your turn. I saw the man myself, among your Germans as you call them; and you know what I must needs believe from such a circumstance."

"Believe that I have been guilty—most guilty, my Liege and King," said the Duke, conscience-struck, and kneeling down;—"believe that I was misguided—that I was mad—Believe anything but that I was capable of harming, or being accessory to harm, your person."

"I do not believe it," said the King; "I think of you, Villiers, as the companion of my dangers and my exile, and am so far from supposing you mean worse than you say, that I am convinced you acknowledge more than you ever meant to attempt."

"By all that is sacred," said the Duke, still kneeling, "had I not been involved to the extent of life and fortune with the villain Christian——"

"Nay, if you bring Christian on the stage again," said the King, smiling, "it is time for me to withdraw. Come, Villiers, rise—I forgive thee, and only recommend one act of penance—the curse you yourself bestowed on the dog who bit you—marriage, and retirement to your country-seat."

The Duke rose abashed, and followed the King into the circle, which Charles entered, leaning on the shoulder of his repentant peer; to whom he shewed so much countenance, as led the most acute observers present, to doubt the possibility of there existing any real cause for the surmises to the Duke's prejudice.

The Countess of Derby had in the meanwhile consulted with the Duke of Ormond, with the Peverils, and with her other friends; and, by their unanimous advice, though with considerable difficulty, became satisfied, that to have thus shewn herself at Court, was sufficient to vindicate the honour of her house; and that it was her wisest course, after having done so, to retire to her insular dominions, without farther provoking the resentment of a powerful faction. She took farewell of the King in form, and demanded his permission to carry back with her the helpless creature who had so strangely escaped from her protection, into a world where her condition rendered her so subject to every species of misfortune.

"Will your ladyship forgive me?" said Charles.

"I have studied your sex long—I am mistaken if your little maiden is not as capable of caring for herself as any of us."

"Impossible!" said the Countess.

"Possible, and most true," whispered the King. "I will instantly convince you of the fact, though the experiment is too delicate to be made by any but your ladyship. Yonder she stands, looking as if she heard no more than the marble pillar against which she leans. Now, if Lady Derby will contrive either to place her hand near the region of the damsel's heart, or at least on her arm, so that she can feel the sensation of the blood when the pulse increases, then do you, my Lord of Ormond, beckon Julian Peveril out of sight—I will shew you in a moment that it can stir at sounds spoken."

The Countess, much surprised, afraid of some embarrassing pleasantry on the part of Charles, yet unable to repress her curiosity, placed herself near Fenella, as she called her little mute; and, while making signs to her, contrived to place her hand on her wrist.

At this moment the King, passing near them, said, "This is a horrid deed—the villain Christian has stabbed young Peveril!"

The mute evidence of the pulse, which bounded as if a cannon had been discharged at the poor girl's ear, was accompanied by such a loud scream of agony, as distressed, while it startled, the good-natured

Monarch himself. "I did but jest," he said; "Julian is well, my pretty maiden. I only used the wand of a certain blind deity, called Cupid, to bring a deaf and dumb vassal of his to the exercise of her faculties."

"I am betrayed!" she said, with her eyes fixed on the ground—"I am betrayed!—and it is fit that she, whose life has been spent in practising treason on others, should be caught in her own snare.—But where is my tutor in iniquity?—Where is Christian, who taught me to play the part of spy on this unsuspicious lady, until I had well nigh delivered her into his bloody hands?"

"This," said the King, "craves more secret examination. Let all leave the apartment who are not immediately connected with these proceedings, and let this Christian be again brought before us. —Wretched man," he continued, addressing Christian, "what wiles are these you have practised, and by what extraordinary means?"

"She has betrayed me, then!" said Christian—"Betrayed me to bonds and death, merely for an idle passion, which can never be successful!—But know, Zarah," he added, addressing her sternly; "when my life is forfeited through thy evidence, the daughter has murdered the father!"

The unfortunate girl stared on him in astonishment. "You said," at length she stammered forth,

" that I was the daughter of your slaughtered brother ?"

" That was partly to reconcile thee to the part thou wert to play in my destined drama of vengeance—partly to hide what men call the infamy of thy birth. But *my* daughter thou art! and from the eastern clime, in which thy mother was born, you derive that fierce torrent of passion which I laboured to train to my purposes, but which, turned into another channel, has become the cause of your father's destruction.—My destiny is the Tower, I suppose ?"

He spoke these words with great composure, and scarce seemed to regard the agonies of his daughter, who, throwing herself at his feet, sobbed and wept most bitterly.

" This must not be," said the King, moved with compassion at this scene of misery. " If you consent, Christian, to leave this country, there is a vessel in the river bound for New England—Go, carry your dark intrigues to other lands."

" I might dispute the sentence," said Christian, boldly ; " and if I submit to it, it is a matter of my own choice.—One half hour had made me even with that proud woman, but fortune hath cast the balance against me.—Rise, Zarah, Fenella no more! Tell the Lady of Derby, that, if the daughter of Edward Christian, the niece of her murdered vic-

tim, served her as a menial, it was but for the purpose of vengeance—miserably, miserably frustrated! —Thou seest thy folly now—thou would'st follow yonder ungrateful stripling—forsake all other thoughts to gain his slightest notice; and now, thou art a forlorn outcast, ridiculed and insulted by those on whose necks you might have trod, had you governed yourself with more wisdom!—But come, thou art still my daughter—there are other skies than that which canopies Britain."

"Stop him," said the King; "we must know by what means this maiden found access to those confined in our prisons."

"I refer your Majesty to your most Protestant jailor, and to the most Protestant Peers, who, in order to obtain perfect knowledge of the depth of the Popish Plot, have contrived these ingenious apertures for visiting them in their cells by night or day. His Grace of Buckingham can assist your Majesty, if you are inclined to make the inquiry."

"Christian," said the Duke, "thou art the most bare-faced villain who ever breathed."

"Of a commoner, I may," answered Christian, and led his daughter out of the presence.

"See after him, Selby," said the King; "lose not sight of him till the ship sail; if he dare return to Britain, it shall be at his peril. Would to God we had as good riddance of others as dangerous! And I would also," he added, after a moment's

pause, "that all our political intrigues and feverish alarms could terminate as harmlessly as now. Here is a plot without a drop of blood; and all the elements of a romance, without its conclusion. Here we have a wandering island princess, (I pray my Lady of Derby's pardon,) a dwarf, a Moorish sorceress, an impenitent rogue, and a repentant man of rank, and yet all ends without either hanging or marriage."

"Not altogether without the latter," said the Countess, who had an opportunity, during the evening, of much private conversation with Julian Peveril. "There is a certain Major Bridgenorth, who, since your Majesty relinquishes farther inquiry into these proceedings, which he had otherwise intended to abide, designs, as we are informed, to leave England for ever. Now, this Bridgenorth, by dint of the law, hath acquired strong possession over the ancient domains of Peveril, which he is desirous to restore to the owners, with much fair land besides, conditionally, that our young Julian will receive them as the dowery of his only child and heir."

"By my faith," said the King, "she must be a foul-favoured wench, indeed, if Julian requires to be pressed to accept her on such fair conditions."

"They love each other like lovers of the last age," said the Countess; "but the stout old Knight loves not the roundheaded alliance."

"Our royal recommendation shall put that to

rights," said the King; "Sir Geoffrey Peveril has not suffered hardship so often at our command, that he will refuse our recommendation when it comes to make him amends for all his losses."

It may be supposed the King did not speak without being fully aware of the unlimited ascendency which he possessed over the spirit of the old Tory; for, within four weeks afterwards, the bells of Martindale-Moultrassie were ringing for the union of the families, from whose estates it takes its compound name, and the beacon light of the Castle blazed high over hill and dale, and summoned all to rejoice who were within twenty miles of its gleam.

END OF PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

La guerre est ma patrie,
Mon harnois ma maison,
Et en toute saison
Combattre c'est ma vie.

INTRODUCTION.

And one who hath had losses—go to.
Much Ado About Nothing.

WHEN honest Dogberry sums up and recites all the claims which he had to respectability, and which, as he opined, ought to have exempted him from the injurious appellation conferred on him by Master Gentleman Conrade, it is remarkable that he lays not more emphasis even upon his double gown, (a matter of some importance in a certain ci-devant capital which I wot of,) or upon his being "a pretty piece of flesh as any in Messina," or even upon the conclusive argument of his being "a *rich* fellow enough," than upon his being *one that hath had losses.*

Indeed, I have always observed your children of prosperity, whether by way of hiding their full glow of splendour from those whom fortune has treated more harshly, or whether that to have risen in spite of calamity is as honourable to their fortune as it is to a fortress to have undergone a siege,—however this be, I have observed that such persons never fail to entertain you with an account of the damage they sustain by the hardness of the times. You seldom dine at a well-supplied table, but what the intervals between the Champagne, the Burgundy, and the Hock, are filled, if your entertainer be a moneyed man, with the fall of interest and the difficulty of finding investments for cash, which is therefore lying idle on his hands; or, if he be a landed proprietor, with a woful detail of arrears and diminished rents. This hath its effects. The guests sigh and shake their heads in cadence with their landlord, look on the sideboard loaded with plate, sip once more the rich wines which flow around them in quick circulation, and think of the genuine benevolence, which, thus stinted of its means, still lavish-

es all that it yet possesses on hospitality; and, what is yet more flattering, on the wealth, which, undiminished by these losses, still continues, like the inexhaustible hoard of the generous Aboulcasem, to sustain, without impoverishment, such copious evacuations.

This querulous humour, however, hath its limits, like to the conning of grievances, which all valetudinarians know is a most fascinating pastime, so long as there is nothing to complain of but chronic complaints. But I never heard a man whose credit was actually verging to decay talk of the diminution of his funds; and my kind and intelligent physician assures me, that it is a rare thing with those afflicted with a good sound fever, or any such active disorder, which

> With mortal crisis doth portend
> His life to appropinque an end,

to make their agonies the subject of amusing conversation.

Having deeply considered all these things, I am no longer able to disguise from my

readers, that I am neither so unpopular nor so low in fortune, as not to have my share in the distresses which at present afflict the moneyed and landed interest of these realms. Your authors who live upon a mutton chop may rejoice that it has fallen to three-pence per pound, and, if they have children, gratulate themselves that the peck-loaf may be had for sixpence; but we who belong to the tribe which are ruined by peace and plenty —we who have lands and beeves, and sell what these poor gleaners must buy—we are driven to despair by the very events which would make all Grub-street illuminate all its attics, if Grub-street could spare candle-ends for the purpose. I therefore put in my proud claim to share in the distresses which only affect the wealthy; and write myself down, with Dogberry, "a rich fellow enough," but still "one who hath had losses."

With the same generous spirit of emulation, I have had lately recourse to the universal remedy for the brief impecuniosity of which I complain—a brief residence in a

southern climate, by which I have not only saved many cart-loads of coals, but have also had the pleasure to excite general sympathy for my decayed circumstances among those, who, if my revenue had continued to be spent among them, would have cared little if I had been hanged. Thus, while I drink my *vin ordinaire*, my brewer finds the sale of his small-beer diminished—while I discuss my flask of *cinq francs*, my modicum of port hangs on my wine-merchant's hands—while my *cotelette a-la-Maintenon* is smoking on my plate, the mighty sirloin hangs on its peg in the shop of my blue-aproned friend in the village. Whatever, in short, I spend here, is missed at home; and the few sous gained by the *garçon perruquier*, nay, the very crust I give to his little bare-bottomed, red-eyed poodle, are *autant de perdu* to my old friend the barber, and honest Trusty, the mastiff-dog in the yard. So that I have the happiness of knowing at every turn, that my absence is both missed and moaned by those, who would care little were I in my coffin, were they sure of the custom of my executors. From this charge of self-seeking

and indifference, however, I solemnly except Trusty, the yard-dog, whose courtesies towards me, I have reason to think, were of a more disinterested character than those of any other person who assisted me to consume the bounty of the Public.

Alas! the advantage of exciting such general sympathies at home cannot be secured without incurring considerable personal inconvenience. "If thou wishest me to weep, thou must first shed tears thyself," says Horace; and, truly, I could sometimes cry myself at the exchange I have made of the domestic comforts which custom had rendered necessaries, for the foreign substitutes which caprice and love of change have rendered fashionable. I cannot but confess with shame, that my home-bred stomach longs for the genuine steak, after the fashion of Dolly's, hot from the gridiron, brown without, and scarlet when the knife is applied; and all the delicacies of Very's *carte*, with his thousand various orthographies of *Bifticks de Mouton*, do not supply the vacancy. Then my mother's son cannot delight in thin potations; and, in these days when malt is had

for nothing, I am convinced that a double *straick* of John Barleycorn must have converted "the poor domestic creature, small-beer," into a liquor twenty times more generous than the acid unsubstantial tipple, which here bears the honoured name of wine, though, in substance and qualities, much similar to your Seine water. Their higher wines, indeed, are well enough—there is nothing to except against in their Chateau Margout, or Sillery; yet I cannot but remember the generous qualities of my sound old Oporto. Nay, down to the *garçon* and his poodle, though they are both amusing animals, and play ten thousand monkey-tricks which are diverting enough, yet there was more sound humour in the wink with which our old village Packwood used to communicate the news of the morning, than all Antoine's gambols could have expressed in a week, and more of human and dog-like sympathy in the wag of old Trusty's tail, than if his rival, Touton, had stood on his hind-legs for a twelvemonth.

These signs of repentance come perhaps a little late, and I own (for I must be en-

tirely candid with my dear friend the Public,) that they have been somewhat matured, by the perversion of my niece Christy to the ancient Popish faith by a certain whacking priest in our neighbourhood, and the marriage of my aunt Dorothy to a *demi-solde* captain of horse, a ci-devant member of the Legion of Honour, and who would, he assures us, have been a Field-Marshal by this time, had our old friend Buonaparte continued to live and to triumph. For the matter of Christy, I must own her head had been so fairly turned at Edinburgh with five routes a-night, that, though I somewhat distrusted the means and medium of her conversion, I was at the same time glad to see that she took a serious thought of any kind;—besides, there was little loss in the matter, for the Convent took her off my hands for a very reasonable pension. But aunt Dorothy's marriage on earth was a very different matter from Christian's celestial espousals. In the first place, there were two thousand three-per-cents as much lost to my family as if the sponge had been drawn over the national slate—for who the deuce

could have thought aunt Dorothy would have married? Above all, who would have thought a woman of fifty years' experience would have married a French anatomy, his lower branch of limbs corresponding with the upper branch, as if one pair of half-extended compasses had been placed perpendicularly upon the top of another, while the space on which the hinges revolved quite sufficed to represent the body? All the rest was moustache, pelisse, and calico trowser. She might have commanded a Polk of real Cossacks in 1815, for half the wealth which she surrendered to this military scarecrow. However, there is no more to be said upon the matter, especially as she had come the length of quoting Rousseau for sentiment—and so let that pass.

Having thus expectorated my bile against a land, which is, notwithstanding, a very merry land, and which I cannot blame, because I sought it, and it did not seek me, I come to the more immediate purpose of this Introduction, and which, my dearest Public, if I do not reckon too much on the continuance of your favours, (though, to say

truth, consistency and uniformity of taste are scarce to be reckoned upon by those who court your good graces,) may perhaps go far to make me amends for the loss and damage I have sustained by bringing aunt Dorothy to the country of thick calves, slender ankles, black moustaches, bodiless limbs, (I assure you the fellow is, as my friend Lord L——said, a complete giblet-pie, all legs and wings,) and fine sentiments. If she had taken from the half-pay list, a ranting Highlandman, ay, or a dashing son of Erin, I would never have mentioned the subject; but as the affair has happened, it is scarce possible not to resent such a gratuitous plundering of her own lawful heirs and executors. But "be hushed my dark spirit," and let us invite our dear Public to a more pleasing theme to us, a more interesting one to others.

By dint of drinking acid tiff, as above mentioned, and smoking segars, in which I am no novice, my Public are to be informed, that I gradually drank and smoked myself into a certain degree of acquaintance with *un homme comme il faut*, one of the few

fine old specimens of nobility who are still to be found in France; who, like mutilated statues of an antiquated and obsolete worship, still command a certain portion of awe and estimation in the eyes even of those by whom neither one nor other were voluntarily rendered.

On visiting the coffee-house of the village, I was, at first, struck with the singular dignity and gravity of this gentleman's manners, his sedulous attachment to shoes and stockings, in contempt of half-boots and pantaloons, the *croix de Saint Louis* at his button-hole, and a small white cockade in the loop of his old-fashioned *schaker*. There was something interesting in his whole appearance; and besides, his gravity among the lively group around him, seemed, like the shade of a tree in the glare of a sunny landscape, more interesting from its rarity. I made such advances towards acquaintance as the circumstances of the place, and the manners of the country, authorized—that is to say, I drew near him, smoked my segar by calm and intermitted puffs, which were scarcely visible, and asked him those few

questions which good breeding everywhere, but more especially in France, permits strangers to put, without hazarding the imputation of impertinence. The Marquis de Hautlieu, for such was his rank, was as short and sententious as French politeness permitted—he answered every question, but proposed nothing, and encouraged no farther inquiry.

The truth was, that, not very accessible to foreigners of any nation, or even to strangers among his own countrymen, the Marquis was peculiarly shy towards the English. A remnant of ancient national prejudice might dictate this feeling; or it might arise from his idea that they are a haughty, purse-proud people, to whom rank, united with straitened circumstances, affords as much a subject for scorn as for pity; or, finally, when he reflected on certain recent events, he might perhaps feel mortified, as a Frenchman, even for those successes which had restored his master to the throne, and himself to a diminished property and dilapidated *chateau*. His dislike, however, never assumed a more active form than that of aliena-

tion from English society. When the affairs of strangers required the interposition of his influence in their behalf, it was uniformly granted with the courtesy of a French gentleman, who knew what is due to himself and to national hospitality.

At length, by some chance, the Marquis made the discovery, that the new frequenter of his ordinary was a native of Scotland, a circumstance which told mightily in my favour. Some of his own ancestors, he informed me, had been of Scottish origin, and he believed his house had still some relations in what he was pleased to call the province of Hanguisse, in that country. The connexion had been acknowledged early in the last century on both sides, and he had once almost determined, during his exile, (for it may be supposed that the Marquis had joined the ranks of Condé, and shared all the misfortunes and distresses of emigration), to claim the acquaintance and protection of his Scottish friends. But, after all, he said, he cared not to present himself before them in circumstances which could do them but small credit, and which they might

think entailed some little burthen, perhaps even some little disgrace; so that he thought it best to trust in Providence, and do the best he could for his own support. What that was I never could learn; but I am sure it inferred nothing which could be discreditable to the excellent old man, who held fast his opinions and his loyalty, through good and bad repute, till time restored him, aged, indigent, and broken-spirited, to the country which he had left in the prime of youth and health, and in a tone of high resentment, which promised speedy vengeance upon those who expelled him. I might have laughed at some points of the Marquis's character, at his prejudices, particularly, both of birth and politics, if I had known him under more prosperous circumstances; but, situated as he was, even if they had not been fair and honest prejudices, turning on no base or interested motive, one must have respected him as we respect the confessor or the martyr of a religion which is not entirely our own.

By degrees we became good friends, drank our coffee, smoked our segar, and took our

bavaroise together, for more than six weeks, with little interruption from avocations on either side. Having, with some difficulty, got the key-note of his inquiries concerning Scotland, by a fortunate conjecture that the province of Hanguisse could only be our shire of Angus, I was enabled to answer the most of his queries concerning his allies there in a manner more or less satisfactory, and was much surprised to find the Marquis much better acquainted with the genealogy of some of the distinguished families in that county, than I could possibly have expected.

On his part, his satisfaction at our intercourse was so great, that he at length wound himself to such a pitch of resolution, as to invite me to dine at the Chateau de Hautlieu, well deserving the name, as occupying a commanding eminence on the banks of the Loire. This building lay about three miles from the town at which I had settled my temporary establishment; and when I first beheld it, I could easily forgive the mortified feelings which the owner testified, at receiving a guest in the asylum

which he had formed out of the ruins of the palace of his fathers. He gradually, with much gaiety, which yet evidently covered a deeper feeling, prepared me for the sort of place I was about to visit; and for this he had full opportunity whilst he drove me in his little cabriolet, drawn by a large heavy Norman horse, towards the ancient building.

Its remains run along a beautiful terrace overhanging the river Loire, which had been formerly laid out with a succession of flights of steps, highly ornamented with statues, rock-work, and other artificial embellishments, descending from one terrace to another, until the very verge of the river was attained. All this architectural decoration, with its accompanying parterres of rich flowers and exotic shrubs, had, many years since, given place to the more profitable scene of the vine-dresser's labours; yet the remains, too massive to be destroyed, are still visible, and, with the various artificial slopes and levels of the high bank, bear perfect evidence how completely Art had been here employed to decorate Nature.

Few of these scenes are now left in perfection, for the fickleness of fashion has accomplished in England the total change which devastation and popular fury have produced in the French pleasure-grounds For my part, I am contented to subscribe to the opinion of the best qualified judge of our time,* who thinks we have carried to an extreme our taste for simplicity, and that the neighbourhood of a stately mansion requires some more ornate embellishments than can be derived from the meagre accompaniments of grass and gravel. A highly romantic situation may be degraded, perhaps, by an attempt at such artificial ornaments ; but then, in by far the greater number of sites, the intervention of more architectural decoration than is now in use, seems necessary to redeem the naked tameness of a large house, placed by itself in the midst of a lawn, where it looks as much uncon-

* See Price's Essay on the Picturesque, in many passages; but I would particularize the beautiful and highly poetical account which he gives of his own feelings on destroying, at the dictate of an improver, an ancient sequestered garden, with its yew hedges, ornamented iron gates, and secluded wilderness.

nected with all around, as if it had walked out of town upon an airing.

How the taste came to change so suddenly and absolutely, is rather a singular circumstance, unless we explain it on the same principle on which the three friends of the Father in Moliere's comedy recommend a cure for the melancholy of his Daughter—that he should furnish her apartments, viz. with paintings—with tapestry—or with china, according to the different commodities in which each of them was a dealer. Tried by this scale, we may perhaps discover, that, of old, the architect laid out the garden and the pleasure-grounds in the neighbourhood of the mansion, and, naturally enough, displayed his own art there in statues and vases, and paved terraces and flights of steps, with ornamented balustrades; while the gardener, subordinate in rank, endeavoured to make the vegetable kingdom correspond to the prevailing taste, and cut his ever-greens into verdant walls, with towers and battlements, and his detached trees into a resemblance of statuary. But the wheel has since revolved, so as to

place the landscape-gardener, as he is called, upon almost a level with the architect; and hence a liberal and somewhat violent use is made of spade and pick-axe, and a converting the ostentatious labours of the architect into a *ferme ornée*, as little different from the simplicity of Nature, as displayed in the surrounding country, as the comforts of convenient and cleanly walks, imperiously demanded in the vicinage of a gentleman's residence, can possibly admit.

To return from this digression, which has given the Marquis's cabriolet (its activity greatly retarded by the downward propensities of Jean-Roast-beef, which I suppose the Norman horse cursed as heartily as his countrymen of old time execrated the stolid obesity of a Saxon slave,) time to ascend the hill by a winding causeway, now much broken, we came in sight of a long range of roofless buildings, connected with the western extremity of the castle, which was totally ruinous. "I should apologize," he said, "to you, as an Englishman, for the taste of my ancestors in connecting that row of stables with the architecture of the cha-

teau. I know in your country it is usual to remove them to some distance; but my family had an hereditary pride in horses, and were fond of visiting them more frequently than would have been convenient if they had been kept at a greater distance. Before the Revolution, I had thirty fine horses in that ruinous line of buildings."

This recollection of past magnificence escaped from him accidentally, for he was generally sparing in alluding to his former opulence. It was quietly said, without any affectation either of the importance attached to early wealth, or as demanding sympathy for its having past away. It awakened unpleasing reflections, however, and we were both silent, till, from a partially repaired corner of what had been a porter's lodge, a lively French *paysanne*, with eyes as black as jet, and as brilliant as diamonds, came out with a smile, which shewed a set of teeth that duchesses might have envied, and took the reins of the little carriage.

"Madelon must be groom to-day," said the Marquis, after graciously nodding in return for her deep reverence to Monsieur,

" for her husband is gone to market; and for La Jeunesse, he is almost distracted with his various occupations. Madelon," he continued, as we walked forward under the entrance-arch, crowned with the mutilated armorial bearings of former lords, now half-obscured by moss and rye-grass, not to mention the vagrant branches of some unpruned shrubs,—" Madelon," he continued, " was my wife's god-daughter, and was educated to be fille-de-chambre to my daughter."

This little passing intimation, that he was a widowed husband and childless father, increased my respect for the unfortunate gentleman, to whom every particular attached to his present situation brought doubtless its own share of food for melancholy reflection. He proceeded, after the pause of an instant, with something of a gayer tone.— " You will be entertained with my poor La Jeunesse," he said, " who, by the way, is ten years older than I am—(the Marquis is above sixty)—he reminds me of the player in the *Roman Comique*, who acted a whole play in his own proper person—he insists on

being maitre d'hotel, maitre de cuisine, valet-de-chambre, a whole suit of attendants in his own poor individuality. He sometimes reminds me of a character in the Bridle of Lammermore, which you must have read, as it is the work of one of your *gens de lettres, qu'on appelle, je crois, le Chevalier Scott.*"

"I presume you mean Sir Walter?"

"Yes—the same—the same," said the Marquis.

We were now led away from more painful recollections; for I had to put my French friend right in two particulars. In the first I prevailed with difficulty; for the Marquis, though he disliked the English, yet, having been three months in London, piqued himself in understanding the most intricate difficulties of our language, and appealed to every dictionary, from Florio downwards, that *la Bride* must mean the Bridle. Nay, so sceptical was he on this point of philology, when I ventured to hint that there was nothing about a bridle in the whole story, that he, with great composure, and little knowing to whom he spoke, laid the whole blame

of that inconsistency on the unfortunate author. I had next the common candour to inform my friend, upon grounds which no one could know so well as myself, that my distinguished literary countryman, of whom I will always speak with the respect his talents deserve, was not responsible for the slight works which the humour of the public had too generously, as well as too rashly, ascribed to him. Surprised by the impulse of the moment, I might even have gone farther, and clenched the negative by positive evidence, owning to my entertainer that no one else could possibly have written these works, since I myself was the author, when I was saved from so rash a commitment of myself by the calm reply of the Marquis, that he was glad to hear these sort of trifles were not written by a person of condition. "We read them," he said, "as we listen to the pleasantries of a comedian, or our ancestors to those of a professed family-jester, with a good deal of amusement, which, however, we should be sorry to derive from the mouth of one who has better claims to our society."

I was completely recalled to my constitu-

tional caution by this declaration; and became so much afraid of committing myself, that I did not even venture to explain to my aristocratic friend, that the gentleman whom he had named owed his advancement, for aught I had ever heard, to certain works of his, which may, without injury, be compared to romances in rhyme.

The truth is, that, amongst some other unjust prejudices, at which I have already hinted, the Marquis had contracted a horror, mingled with contempt, for almost every species of author-craft, slighter than that which compounds a folio volume of law or of divinity, and looked upon the author of a romance, novel, fugitive poem, or periodical piece of criticism, as men do on a venomous reptile, with fear at once and with loathing. The abuse of the press, he contended, especially in its lighter departments, had poisoned the whole morality of Europe, and was gradually once more regaining an influence which had been silenced amidst the voice of war. All writers, except those of the largest and heaviest calibre, he conceived to be devoted to this evil cause, from Rousseau and Voltaire

down to Pigault le Brun and the author of the Scotch Novels; and although he admitted he read them *pour passer le temps*, yet, like Pistol eating his leek, it was not without execrating the tendency, as he devoured the story, of the work with which he was engaged.

Observing this peculiarity, I backed out of the candid confession which my vanity had meditated, and engaged the Marquis in farther remarks on the mansion of his ancestors. "There," he said, "was the theatre where my father used to procure an order for the special attendance of some of the principal actors of the Comedie Francoise, when the King and Madame Pompadour more than once visited him at this place; —yonder, more to the centre, was the Baron's hall, where his feudal jurisdiction was exercised when criminals were to be tried by the Seigneur or his bailiff; for we had, like your old Scotch nobles, the right of pit and gallows, or *fossa cum furca*, as the civilians term it;—beneath that lies the Question-chamber, or apartment for torture; and, truly, I am sorry a right so liable to abuse

should have been lodged in the hands of any living creature. But," he added, with a feeling of dignity derived even from the atrocities which his ancestors had committed beneath the grated windows to which he pointed, " such is the effect of superstition, that, to this day, the peasants dare not approach the dungeons, in which, it is said, the wrath of my ancestors had perpetrated, in former times, much cruelty."

As we approached the window, while I expressed some curiosity to see this abode of terror, there arose from its subterranean abyss a shrill shout of laughter, which we easily detected as produced by a group of playful children, who had made the neglected vaults a theatre, for a joyous romp at Colin Maillard.

The Marquis was somewhat disappointed, and had recourse to his *tabatiere ;* but, recovering in a moment, observed, these were Madelon's children, and familiar with the supposed terrors of the subterranean recesses. " Besides," he added, " to speak the truth, these poor children have been born after the period of supposed illumination,

which dispelled our superstition and our religion at once; and this bids me to remind you, that it is a *jour maigre*. The *Curé* of the parish is my only guest, besides yourself, and I would not voluntarily offend his opinions. Besides," he continued, more manfully, and throwing off his restraint, "adversity has taught me other thoughts on these subjects than those which prosperity dictated; and I thank God I am not ashamed to avow, that I follow the observances of my church."

I hastened to answer, that, though they might differ from those of my own, I had every possible respect for the religious rules of every christian community, sensible that we addressed the same Deity, on the same grand principle of salvation, though with different forms; which variety of worship, had it pleased the Almighty not to permit, our observances would have been as distinctly prescribed to us as they are laid down under the Mosaic law.

The Marquis was no shaker of hands, but upon the present occasion he grasped mine, and shook it kindly—the only mode of ac-

quiescence in my sentiments which perhaps a zealous Catholic could, or ought consistently to have given upon such an occasion.

This circumstance of explanation and remark, with others which arose out of the view of the extensive ruins, occupied us during two or three turns upon the long terrace, and a seat of about a quarter of an hour's endurance in a vaulted pavilion of freestone, decorated with the Marquis's armorial bearings, the roof of which, though disjointed in some of its groind-arches, was still solid and entire. "Here," said he, resuming the tone of a former part of his conversation, "I love to sit, either at noon, when the alcove affords me shelter from the heat, or in the evening, when the sun's beams are dying on the broad face of the Loire—here, in the words of your great poet, whom, Frenchman as I am, I am more intimately acquainted with than most Englishmen, I love to rest myself,

"Shewing the code of sweet and bitter fancy."

Against this various reading of a well-

known passage in Shakespeare I took care to offer no protest; for I suspect Shakespeare would have suffered in the opinion of so delicate a judge as the Marquis, had I proved his having written "chewing the cud," according to all other authorities. Besides, I had had enough of our former dispute, having been long convinced, (though not till ten years after I left Edinburgh College,) that the pith of conversation does not consist in exhibiting your own superior knowledge on matters of small consequence, but in enlarging, improving, and correcting the information you possess, by the authority of others. I therefore let the Marquis *shew* his *code* at his pleasure, and was rewarded by his entering into a learned and well-informed disquisition on the florid style of architecture introduced into France during the seventeenth century. He pointed out its merits and its defects with considerable taste; and having touched on topics similar to those which I have formerly digressed upon, he made an appeal of a different kind in their favour, founded upon the associations with which they were combined. "Who," he

said, "would willingly destroy the terraces of the Chateau of Sully, since we cannot tread them without recalling the image of that statesman, alike distinguished for severe integrity and for strong and unerring sagacity of mind? Were they an inch less broad, a ton's weight less massive, or were they deprived of their formality by the slightest inflections, could we suppose them to remain the scene of his patriotic musings? Would an ordinary root-house be a fit scene for the Duke occupying an arm-chair, and his Duchess a *tabouret*—teaching from thence lessons of courage and fidelity to his sons, —of modesty and submission to his daughters,—of rigid morality to both; while the circle of young noblesse listened with ears attentive, and eyes modestly fixed on the ground, in a standing posture, neither replying nor sitting down, without the express command of their prince and parent? —No, Monsieur," he said, with enthusiasm; "destroy the princely pavilion in which this edifying family-scene was represented, and you remove from the mind the vraisemblance, the veracity of the whole repre-

sentation. Or can your mind suppose this distinguished peer and patriot walking in a *jardin Anglois?* Why, you might as well fancy him dressed with a blue froc and white waistcoat, instead of his Henri Quatre coat and *chapeau a-plumes*—Consider how he could have moved in the tortuous maze of what you have called a *ferme ornée*, with his usual attendants of two files of Swiss guards preceding, and the same number following him. To recal his figure, with his beard—*haut-des-chausses a canon*, united to his doublet by ten thousand *aiguilettes* and knots of ribbon, you could not, supposing him in a modern *jardin Anglois*, distinguish the picture in your imagination, from the sketch of some mad old man, who has adopted the humour of dressing like his great-great-grandfather, and whom a party of gens-d'armes was conducting to the *Maison des Fous*. But look on the long and magnificent terrace, if it yet exists, which the loyal and exalted Sully was wont to make the scene of his solitary walk twice a-day, while he pondered over the patriotic schemes which he nourished for advancing the glory

of France; or, at a later, and more sorrowful period of life, brooded over the memory of his murdered master, and the fate of his distracted country;—throw into that noble back-ground of arcades, vases, images, urns, and whatever could express the vicinity of a ducal palace, and the landscape becomes consistent at once. The *factionaires*, with their harquebusses ported, placed at the extremities of the long and level walk, intimate the presence of the feudal prince; while the same is more clearly shewn by the guard of honour which precede and follow him, their halberts carried upright, their mien martial and stately, as if in the presence of an enemy, yet moved, as it were, with the same soul as their princely superior—teaching their steps to attend upon his, marching as he marches, halting as he halts, accommodating their pace even to the slight irregularities of pause and advance dictated by the fluctuations of his reverie, and wheeling with military precision before and behind him, who seems the centre and animating principle of their armed files, as the heart gives life and energy to the hu-

man body. Or, if you smile," added the Marquis, looking doubtfully on my countenance, "at a promenade so inconsistent with the light freedom of modern manners, could you bring your mind to demolish that other terrace trod by the fascinating Marchioness de Sevigné, with which are united so many recollections connected with passages in her enchanting letters ?"

A little tired of this disquisition, which the Marquis certainly dwelt upon to exalt the natural beauties of his own terrace, which, dilapidated as it was, required no such formal recommendation, I informed my friend, that I had just received from England a journal of a tour made in the south of France by a young Oxonian friend of mine, a poet, a draughtsman, and a scholar,—in which he gives such an animated and interesting description of the Chateau-Grignan, the dwelling of Madame de Sevigné's beloved daughter, and frequently the place of her own residence, that no one who ever read the book would be within forty miles of the same, without going a pilgrimage to the spot. The Marquis smiled, seemed very much pleased, and

asked the title at length of the work in question; and writing down to my dictation, "An Itinerary of Provence and the Rhone, made during the year 1819; by John Hughes, A. M., of Oriel College, Oxford,"—observed, he could now purchase no books for the chateau, but would recommend that the Itineraire should be commissioned for the library to which he was abonné in the neighbouring town. "And here," he said, "comes the Curé, to save us farther disquisition; and I see La Jeunesse gliding round the old portico on the terrace, with the purpose of ringing the dinner-bell—a most unnecessary ceremony for assembling three persons, but which it would break the old man's heart to forego. Take no notice of him at present, as he wishes to perform the duties of the inferior departments incognito; when the bell has ceased to sound, he will blaze forth on us in the character of major-domo."

As the Marquis spoke, we were advanced towards the eastern extremity of the Chateau, which was the only part of the edifice that remained still habitable.

"The *Bande Noire*," said the Marquis,

" when they pulled the rest of the house to pieces, for the sake of the lead, timber, and other materials, have, in their ravages, done me the undesigned favour to reduce it to dimensions better fitting the circumstances of the owner. There is enough of the leaf left for the caterpillar to coil up his chrysalis in, and what needs he care what reptiles have devoured the rest of the bush?"

As he spoke thus, we reached the door, at which La Jeunesse appeared, with an air at once of prompt service and deep respect, and a countenance, which, though puckered by a thousand wrinkles, was ready to answer the first good-natured word of his master with a smile, which shewed his white set of teeth firm and fair, in despite of age and suffering. His clean silk stockings, washed till their tint had become yellowish—his cue tied with a rosette—the thin gray curl on either side of his lank cheek—the pearl-coloured coat, without a collar—the solitaire, the *jabot*, the ruffles at the wrist, and the *chapeau-bras*—all announced that La Jeunesse considered the arrival of a guest at the Chateau as an unusual event, which

was to be met with a corresponding display of magnificence and parade on his part.

As I looked at the faithful though fantastic follower of his master, who doubtless inherited his prejudices as well as his cast-clothes, I could not but own, in my own mind, the resemblance pointed out by the Marquis betwixt him and my own Caleb, the trusty squire of the Master of Ravenswood. But a Frenchman, a Jack-of-all-trades by nature, can, with much more ease and suppleness, address himself to a variety of services, and suffice in his own person to discharge them all, than is possible for the formality and slowness of a Scotchman. Superior to Caleb in dexterity, though not in zeal, La Jeunesse seemed to multiply himself with the necessities of the occasion, and discharged his several tasks with such promptitude and assiduity, that farther attendance than his was neither missed nor wished for.

The dinner, in particular, was exquisite. The soup, although bearing the term of *maigre*, which Englishmen use in scorn, was most delicately flavoured, and the matelot

of pike and eels reconciled me, though a Scotchman, to the latter. There was even a petit plat of *bouilli* for the heretic, so exquisitely dressed as to retain all the juices, and, at the same time, rendered so thoroughly tender, that nothing could be more delicate. The *potage*, with another small dish or two, were equally well arranged. But what the old maitre d'hotel valued himself upon as something superb, smiling with self-satisfaction, and in enjoyment of my surprise, as he placed it on the table, was an immense *assiette* of spinage, not smoothed into a uniform surface, as by our uninaugurated cooks upon your side of the water, but swelling into hills, and declining into vales, over which swept a gallant stag, pursued by a pack of hounds in full cry, and a noble field of horsemen with bugle-horns, and whips held upright, and brandished after the manner of broad-swords—hounds, hunstman, and stag, being all very artificially cut out of toasted bread. Enjoying the praises which I failed not to bestow on this *chef d'œuvre*, the old man acknowledged it had cost the best part of two days to bring

it to perfection; and added, giving honour where honour was due, that an idea so brilliant was not entirely his own, but that Monsieur himself had taken the trouble to give him several valuable hints, and even condescended to assist in the execution of some of the most capital figures. The Marquis blushed a little at this eclaircissement, which he might probably have wished to suppress, but acknowledged he had wished to surprise me with a scene from the popular poem of my country, Miladi Lac. I answered, that so splendid a cortege much more resembled a grand chasse of Louis Quartorze than of a poor King of Scotland, and that the *paysage* was rather like Fontainbleau than the wilds of Callender. He bowed graciously in answer to this compliment, and acknowledged that recollections of the costume of the old French Court, when in its splendour, might have misled his imagination—and so the conversation passed on to other matters.

Our dessert was exquisite—the cheese, the fruits, the sallad, the olives, the *cernaux*, and the delicious white wine, each in their

way were *impayables;* and the good Marquis, with an air of great satisfaction, observed, that his guest did sincere homage to their merits. "After all," he said, "and yet it is but confessing a foolish weakness—but, after all, I cannot but rejoice in feeling myself equal to offering a stranger a sort of hospitality which seems pleasing to him. Believe me, it is not entirely out of pride that we *pauvres revenants* live so very retired, and avoid the duties of hospitality. It is true, that too many of us wander about the halls of our fathers, rather like ghosts of their deceased proprietors, than like living men restored to their own possessions—yet it is rather on your account, than to spare our own feelings, that we do not cultivate the society of our foreign visitors. We have an idea that your opulent nation is particularly attached to *faste*, and to *grande chere* —to your ease and enjoyment of every kind; and the means of entertainment left to us are, in most cases, so limited, that we feel ourselves totally precluded from such expense and ostentation. No one wishes to offer his best where he has reason to think it

will not give pleasure; and, as many of you publish your journals, Monsieur le Marquis would not probably be much gratified, by seeing the poor dinner which he was able to present to Milord Anglois put upon permanent record."

I interrupted the Marquis, that were I to wish an account of my entertainment published, it would be only in order to preserve the memory of the very best dinner I ever had eaten in my life. He bowed in return, and presumed "that I either differed much from the national taste, or the accounts of it were greatly exaggerated. He was particularly obliged to me for shewing the value of the possessions which remained to him. The useful," he said, "had no doubt survived the sumptuous at Hautlieu as elsewhere. Grottoes, statues, curious conservatories of exotics, temple and tower, had gone to the ground; but the vineyard, the potager, the orchard, the *etang*, still existed; and once more he expressed himself happy to find, that their combined productions could make what even a Briton accepted as a tolerable meal. I only hope," he continued,

"that you will convince me your compliments are sincere, by accepting the hospitality of the Chateau de Hautlieu as often as better engagements will permit during your stay in this neighbourhood."

I readily promised to accept an invitation offered with such grace, as to make the guest appear the person conferring the obligation.

The conversation then changed to the history of the Chateau and its vicinity—a subject which was strong ground to the Marquis, though he was no great antiquary, and even no very profound historian, where these topics were out of question. The Curé, however, chanced to be both, and withal a very conversible pleasing man, with an air of *prevenance*, and ready civility of communication, which I have found a leading characteristic of the Catholic clergy, whenever they are well-informed or otherwise. It was from him that I learned there still existed the remnant of a fine library in the Chateau de Hautlieu. The Marquis shrugged his shoulders as the Curé gave me this intimation, looked to the one side and the

other, and displayed the same sort of petty embarrassment which he had been unable to suppress when La Jeunesse blabbed something of his interference with the arrangements of the *cuisine*. "I should be happy to shew the books," he said, "but they are in such a wild condition, so dismantled, that I am ashamed to shew them to any one."

"Forgive me, my dear sir," said the Curé, "you know you permitted the great English Bibliomaniac, Dr Dibdin, to consult your curious reliques, and you know how highly he spoke of them."

"What could I do, my dear friend?" said the Marquis; "the good Doctor had heard some exaggerated account of these remnants of what was once a library—he had stationed himself in the *auberge* below, determined to carry his point or die under the walls. I even heard of his taking the altitude of the turret, in order to provide scaling-ladders. You would not have had me reduce a respectable divine, though of another church, to such an act of desperation? I could not have answered it in conscience."

" But you know, besides, Monsieur le Marquis," continued the Curé, " that Dr Dibdin was so much grieved at the dilapidation your library had sustained, that he avowedly envied the powers of our church, so much did he long to launch an anathema at the heads of the perpetrators."

" His resentment was in proportion to his disappointment, I suppose," said our entertainer.

" Not so," said the Curé ; " for he was so enthusiastic on the value of what remains, that I am convinced that nothing but your positive request to the contrary prevented the Chateau of Hautlieu occupying at least twenty pages in that splendid work of which he sent us a copy, and which will remain a lasting monument of his zeal and erudition."

" Dr Dibdin is extremely polite," said the Marquis ; " and, when we have had our coffee—here it comes—we will go to the turret ; and I hope, as Monsieur has not despised my poor fare, so he will pardon the state of my confused library, while I shall be equally happy if it can afford anything

which can give him amusement. Indeed," he added, "were it otherwise, you, my good father, have every right over books, which, without your intervention, would never have returned to the owner."

Although this additional act of courtesy was evidently wrested by the importunity of the Curé from his reluctant friend, whose desire to conceal the nakedness of the land, and the extent of his losses, seemed always to struggle with his disposition to be obliging, I could not help accepting an offer, which, in strict politeness, I ought perhaps to have refused. But then the remains of a collection of such curiosity as had given to our bibliomaniacal Doctor the desire of leading the forlorn hope in an escalade—it would have been a desperate act of self-denial to have declined an opportunity of seeing it. La Jeunesse brought coffee, such as we only taste on the continent, upon a salver, covered with a napkin, that it might be *censé* for silver; and *chasse-caffe* from Martinique on a small waiter, which was certainly so. Our repast thus finished, the Marquis led me, up an *escalier derobé*, into

a very large and well-proportioned saloon, of nearly one hundred feet in length; but so waste and dilapidated, that I kept my eyes on the ground, lest my kind entertainer should feel himself called upon to apologize for tattered pictures and torn tapestry; and, worse than both, for casements that had yielded, in one or two instances, to the boisterous blast.

"We have contrived to make the turret something more habitable," said the Marquis, as he moved hastily through this chamber of desolation. "This," he said, "was the picture gallery in former times, and in the boudoir beyond, which we now occupy as a book-closet, were preserved some curious cabinet paintings, whose small size required that they should be viewed nearly."

As he spoke, he held aside a portion of the tapestry I have mentioned, and we entered the room of which he spoke.

It was octangular, corresponding to the external shape of the turret whose interior it occupied. Four of the sides had latticed windows, commanding each, from a differ-

ent point, the most beautiful prospect over the majestic Loire, and the adjacent country through which it winded; and the casements were filled with stained glass, through two of which streamed the lustre of the setting sun, shewing a brilliant assemblage of religious emblems and armorial bearings, which it was scarce possible to look at with an undazzled eye; but the other two windows, from which the sun-beams had passed away, could be closely examined, and plainly shewed that the lattices were glazed with stained glass, which did not belong to them originally, but, as I afterwards learned, to the profaned and desecrated chapel of the Castle. It had been the amusement of the Marquis, for several months, to accomplish this *rifacciamento*, with the assistance of the Curate and the all-capable La Jeunesse; and though they had only patched together fragments, which were in many places very minute, yet the stained glass, till examined very closely, and with the eye of an antiquary, produced, on the whole, a very pleasing effect.

The sides of the apartment, not occupied

by the lattices, were (excepting the space for the small door) fitted up with presses and shelves, some of walnut tree, curiously carved, and brought to a dark colour by time, nearly resembling that of a ripe chesnut, and partly of common deal, employed to repair and supply the deficiencies occasioned by violence and devastation. On these shelves were deposited the wrecks, or rather the precious reliques, of a most splendid library.

The Marquis's father had been a man of information, and his grandfather was famous, even in the Court of Louis XIV., where literature was in some degree considered as the fashion, for the extent of his acquirements. Those two proprietors, opulent in their fortunes, and liberal in the indulgence of their taste, had made such additions to a curious old Gothic library, which had descended from their ancestors, that there were few collections in France which could be compared to that of Hautlieu. It had been completely dispersed, in consequence of an ill-judged attempt of the present Marquis, in 1790, to defend his

Chateau against a revolutionary mob. Luckily, the Curé, who, by his charitable and moderate conduct, and his evangelical virtues, possessed much interest among the neighbouring peasantry, prevailed on many of them to buy, for the petty sum of a few sous, and sometimes at the vulgar rate of a glass of brandy, volumes which had cost large sums, but which were carried off in mere spite by the ruffians who pillaged the castle. He himself also had purchased as many of the books as his funds could possibly reach, and to his care it was owing that they were restored to the turret in which I found them. It was no wonder, therefore, that the good Curé had some pride and pleasure in shewing the collection to strangers.

In spite of odd volumes, imperfections, and all the other mortifications which an amateur encounters in looking through an ill-kept library, there were many articles in that of Hautlieu, calculated, as Bayes says, "to elevate and surprise" the Bibliomaniac. There were,

"The small rare volume, dark with tarnish'd gold,"

as Dr Ferrier feelingly sings—curious and richly painted missals, manuscripts of 1380, 1320, and even earlier, and works in Gothic type, printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But of these I intend to give a more detailed account, should the Marquis grant his permission.

In the meantime, it is sufficient to say, that, delighted with the day I had spent at Hautlieu, I frequently repeated my visit, and that the key of the octangular tower was always at my command. In those hours I became deeply enamoured of a part of French history, which, although most important to that of Europe at large, and illustrated by an inimitable old historian, I had never sufficiently studied. At the same time, to gratify the feelings of my excellent host, I occupied myself occasionally with some family memorials, which had fortunately been preserved, and which contained some curious particulars respecting the connection with Scotland, which first found me favour in the eyes of the Marquis de Hautlieu.

I pondered on these things, *more meo*, until my return to Britain, to beef and sea-coal fires, a change of residence which took place since I drew up these Gallic reminiscences. At length, the result of my meditations took the form of which my readers, if not startled by this preface, will presently be enabled to judge. Should the Public receive it with favour, I will not regret having been for a short time an Absentee.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

CHAP. I.

THE CONTRAST.

> Look here upon this picture, and on this,
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
>
> *Hamlet.*

THE latter part of the fifteenth century prepared a train of future events, that ended by raising France to that state of formidable power, which has ever since been, from time to time, the principal object of jealousy to the other European nations. Before that period, she had to struggle for her very existence with the English, already possessed of her fairest provinces; while the utmost exertions of her King, and the gallantry of her natives, could scarce protect the remainder from a foreign yoke. Neither was this her sole danger. The Princes who possessed the grand fiefs of the crown, and, in par-

ticular, the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne, had come to wear their feudal bonds so lightly, that they had no scruple in lifting the standard against their liege and sovereign lord, the King of France, on the slightest pretences. When at peace, they reigned as absolute princes in their own provinces; and the House of Burgundy, possessed of the district so called, together with the fairest and richest part of Flanders, was of itself so wealthy, and so powerful, as to yield nothing to the crown, either in splendour or in strength.

In imitation of the grand feudatories, each inferior vassal of the crown assumed as much independence as his distance from the sovereign power, the extent of his fief, or the strength of his residence, enabled him to maintain; and these petty tyrants, no longer amenable to the exercise of the law, perpetrated with impunity the wildest excesses of fantastic oppression and cruelty. In Auvergne alone, a report was made of more than three hundred of these independent nobles, to whom incest, murder, and rapine, were the most ordinary and familiar actions.

Besides these evils, another, springing out of the long-continued wars betwixt the French and English, added no small misery to this distracted kingdom. Numerous bodies of soldiers collected into bands, under officers chosen by themselves, from among the bravestand most successful adventurers

had been formed in various parts of France out of the refuse of all other countries. These hireling combatants sold their swords for a time to the best bidder; and, where such offer was wanting, they made war on their own account, seizing castles and towers, which they used as the places of their retreat,—making prisoners, and ransoming them,—exacting tribute from the open villages and the country around them,—and acquiring, by every species of rapine, the appropriate epithets of *Tondeurs* and *Escorcheurs*, that is, *Clippers* and *Flayers*.

In the midst of the horrors and miseries arising from so distracted a state of public affairs, reckless and profuse expense distinguished the courts of the lesser nobles, as well as of the superior princes; and their dependents, in imitation, expended in rude, but magnificent display, the wealth which they extorted from the people. A tone of romantic and chivalrous gallantry (which, however, was often disgraced by unbounded licence,) characterized the intercourse between the sexes; and the language of knight-errantry was yet used, and its observances followed, though the pure spirit of honourable love, and benevolent enterprize, which it inculcates, had ceased to qualify and atone for its extravagancies. The jousts and tournaments, the entertainments and revels, which each petty court displayed, invited to France every wandering adventurer; and it was seldom that, when arrived there, he failed to

employ his rash courage, and headlong spirit of enterprize, in actions for which his happier native country afforded no free stage.

At this period, and as if to save this fair realm from the various woes with which it was menaced, the tottering throne was ascended by Louis XI., whose character, evil as it was in itself, met, combated, and in a great degree neutralized, the mischiefs of the time—as poisons of opposing qualities are said, in ancient books of medicine, to have the power of counteracting each other.

Brave enough for every useful and political purpose, Louis had not a spark of that romantic valour, or of the pride connected with, and arising out of it, which fought on for the point of honour, when the point of utility had been long gained. Calm, crafty, and profoundly attentive to his own interest, he made every sacrifice, both of pride and passion, which could interfere with it. He was careful in disguising his real sentiments and purposes from all who approached him, and frequently used the expressions, "that the king knew not how to reign, who knew not how to dissemble; and that, for himself, if he thought his very cap knew his secrets, he would throw it into the fire." No man of his own, or of any other time, better understood how to avail himself of the frailties of others, and when to avoid giving any advantage by the untimely indulgence of his own.

He was by nature vindictive and cruel, even to the extent of finding pleasure in the frequent executions which he commanded. But, as no touch of mercy ever induced him to spare, when he could with safety condemn, so no sentiment of vengeance ever stimulated him to a premature violence. He seldom sprung on his prey till it was fairly within his grasp, and till all chance of rescue was in vain; and his movements were so studiously disguised, that his success was generally what first announced to the world what object he had been manœuvring to attain.

In like manner, the avarice of Louis gave way to apparent profusion, when it was necessary to bribe the favourite or minister of a rival prince for averting any impending attack, or to break up any alliance confederated against him. He was fond of licence and pleasure; but neither beauty nor the chase, though both were ruling passions, ever withdrew him from the most regular attendance to public business and the affairs of his kingdom. His knowledge of mankind was profound, and he had sought it in the private walks of life, in which he often personally mingled; and though, personally proud and haughty, he hesitated not, with an inattention to the arbitrary divisions of society, which was then thought something portentously unnatural, to raise from the lowest rank men whom he employed on the most important duties, and knew so

well how to choose them, that he was rarely disappointed in their qualities.

Yet there were contradictions in the nature of this artful and able monarch; for humanity is never uniform. Himself the most false and insincere of mankind, some of the greatest errors of his life arose from too rash a confidence in the honour and integrity of others. When these errors took place, they seem to have arisen from an over-refined system of policy, which induced Louis to assume the appearance of undoubting confidence in those whom it was his object to over-reach; for, in his general conduct, he was as jealous and suspicious as any tyrant who ever lived.

Two other points may be noticed, to complete the sketch of this formidable character, who rose among the rude chivalrous sovereigns of the period to the rank of a keeper among wild beasts, who, by superior wisdom and policy, by distribution of food, and some discipline by blows, comes finally to predominate over those, who, if unsubjected by his arts, would by main strength have torn him to pieces.

The first of these attributes was Louis's excessive superstition, a plague with which Heaven often afflicts those who refuse to listen to the dictates of religion. The remorse arising from his evil actions, Louis never endeavoured to appease by any relaxation in his Machiavellian stratagems, but laboured, in vain, to sooth and silence that painful feel-

ing by superstitious observances, severe penance, and profuse gifts to the ecclesiastics. The second property, with which the first is sometimes found strangely united, was a disposition to low pleasures and obscure debauchery. The wisest, or at least the most crafty Sovereign of his time, he was fond of ordinary life, and, being himself a man of wit, enjoyed the jests and repartees of social conversation more than could have been expected from other points of his character. He even mingled in the comic adventures of obscure intrigue, with a freedom scarce consistent with the habitual and guarded jealousy of his character; and was so fond of this species of humble gallantry, that he caused a number of its gay and licentious anecdotes to be enrolled in a collection well known to book-collectors, in whose eyes (and the work is unfit for any other) the *right* edition is very precious.

By means of this monarch's powerful and prudent, though most unamiable character, it pleased Heaven, who works by the tempest as well as by the soft small rain, to restore to the great French nation the benefits of civil government, which, at the time of his accession, they had nearly lost altogether.

Ere he succeeded to the crown, Louis had given evidence of his vices rather than of his talents. His first wife, Margaret of Scotland, was "done to death by slanderous tongues" in her husband's Court,

where, without his encouragement, no word had been breathed against that amiable and injured princess. He had been an ungrateful and a rebellious son, at one time conspiring to seize his father's person, and at another, levying open war against him. For the first offence, he was banished to his appanage of Dauphine, which he governed with much sagacity—for the second, he was driven into absolute exile, and forced to throw himself on the mercy, and almost the charity, of the Duke of Burgundy and his son, where he enjoyed hospitality, afterwards indifferently requited, until the death of his father in 1461.

In the very outset of his reign, Louis was almost overpowered by a league formed against him by the great vassals of France, with the Duke of Burgundy, or rather his son, the Count de Charalois, at its head. They levied a powerful army, blockaded Paris, fought a battle of doubtful event under its very walls, and put the French Monarchy on the brink of actual destruction. It usually happens in such cases, that the most sagacious general of the two gains the real fruit, though perhaps not the martial fame, of the disputed field. Louis, who had shewn great personal bravery during the battle of Montlhery, was able, by his prudence, to avail himself of its undecided event, as if it had been a victory on his side. He temporized until the enemy had broken up their leaguer, and shewed so

much dexterity in sowing jealousies among those great powers, that their alliance "for the public weal," as they termed it, but, in reality, for the overthrow of all but the external appearance of the French monarchy, broke to pieces, and was never again renewed in a manner so formidable. From this period, for several years, Louis, relieved of all danger from England, by the Civil Wars of York and Lancaster, was engaged, like an unfeeling but able physician, in curing the wounds of the body politic, or rather in stopping, now by gentle remedies, now by the use of fire and steel, the progress of those mortal gangrenes with which it was then infected. The *brigandage* of the Free Companies, and the unpunished oppressions of the nobility, he laboured to lessen, since he could not actually stop them; and gradually, by dint of unrelaxed attention, he gained some addition to his own regal authority, or affected some diminution of those by which it was counterbalanced.

Still the King of France was surrounded by doubt and danger. The members of the league "for the public weal," though not in unison, were in existence, and that scotched snake might re-unite and become dangerous again. But a worse danger was the increasing power of the Duke of Burgundy, then one of the greatest Princes of Europe, and little diminished in rank by the very precarious dependence of his duchy upon the crown of France.

Charles, surnamed the Bold, or rather the Audacious, for his courage was allied to rashness and frenzy, then wore the ducal coronet of Burgundy, which he burned to convert into a royal and independent regal crown. The character of this Duke was in every respect the direct contrast to that of Louis XI.

The former was calm, deliberate, and crafty, never prosecuting a desperate enterprize, and never abandoning a probable one, however distant the prospect of success. The genius of the Duke was entirely different. He rushed on danger because he loved it, and on difficulties because he despised them. As Louis never sacrificed his interest to his passion, so Charles, on the other hand, never sacrified his passion, or even his humour, to any other considerations. Notwithstanding the near relationship that existed between them, and the support which the Duke and his father had afforded to Louis in his exile when Dauphin, there was mutual contempt and hatred betwixt them. The Duke of Burgundy despised the cautious policy of the King, and imputed to the faintness of his courage, that he sought by leagues, purchases, and other indirect means, those advantages, which, in his place, he would have snatched with an armed hand; and he hated him, not only for the ingratitude he had manifested for former kindnesses, and for personal injuries and imputations which the

ambassadors of Louis had cast upon him, when his father was yet alive, but also, and especially, because of the support which he afforded in secret to the discontented citizens of Ghent, Liege, and other great towns in Flanders. These turbulent cities, jealous of their privileges, and proud of their wealth, frequently were in a state of insurrection, against their liege lords the Dukes of Burgundy, and never failed to find under-hand countenance at the Court of Louis, who embraced every opportunity of fomenting disturbance within the dominions of his overgrown vassal.

The contempt and hatred of the Duke were retaliated by Louis with equal energy, though he used a thicker veil to conceal his sentiments. It was impossible for a man of his profound sagacity not to despise the stubborn obstinacy which never resigned its purpose, however fatal perseverance might prove, and the headlong impetuosity, which commenced its career without allowing a moment's consideration for the obstacles to be encountered. Yet the King hated Charles even more than he contemned him, and his scorn and hatred were the more intense, that they were mingled with fear; for he knew that the onset of the mad bull, to whom he likened the Duke of Burgundy, must ever be formidable, though the animal makes it with shut eyes. It was not alone the wealth of the Burgundian provinces, the discipline of the warlike

inhabitants, and the mass of their crowded population, which the King dreaded, for the personal qualities of their leader had also much in them that was dangerous. The very soul of bravery, which he pushed to the verge of rashness, and beyond it —profuse in expenditure—splendid in his court, his person, and his retinue, in all which he displayed the hereditary magnificence of the house of Burgundy, Charles the Bold drew into his service almost all the fiery spirits of the age whose temper was congenial; and Louis saw too clearly what might be attempted and executed by such a train of desperate resolutes, following a leader of a character as ungovernable as their own.

There was yet another circumstance which increased the animosity of Louis towards his overgrown vassal; for he owed him favours which he never meant to repay, and was under the frequent necessity of temporizing with him, and even of enduring bursts of petulant insolence, injurious to the regal dignity, without being able to treat him as other than his "fair cousin of Burgundy."

It was about the year 1468, when their feuds were at the highest, though a dubious and hollow truce, as frequently happened, existed for the time betwixt them, that the present narrative opens. The person first introduced on the stage will be found indeed to be of a rank and circumstance, which one would have thought scarce needed illus-

tration from a dissertation on the relative position of two great princes; but the passions of the great, their quarrels, and their reconciliations, involve the fortunes of all who approach them; and it will be found, on proceeding farther in our story, that this preliminary Chapter is necessary for comprehending the adventures of the individual whom we are about to describe.

CHAP. II.

THE WANDERER.

Why then the world is my oyster, which I with sword will open.
Ancient Pistol.

It was upon a delicious summer morning, before the sun had assumed its scorching power, and while the dews yet cooled and perfumed the air, that a youth, coming from the north-eastward, approached the ford of a small river, or rather a large brook, tributary to the Cher, near to the royal Castle of Plessis, whose dark and multiplied battlements rose in the back ground over the extensive forest with which they were surrounded. These woodlands comprized a noble chase, or royal park, fenced by an enclosure, termed in the Latin of the middle ages, *Plexitium*, which gives the name of Plessis to so many villages in France. The castle and village of which we particularly speak, was called Plessis-les-Tours, to distinguish it from others of the same name, and was built about two miles to the southward of the fair town of that name, the capi-

tal of ancient Touraine, whose rich plain has been termed the Garden of France.

On the bank of the abovementioned brook, opposite to that which the traveller was approaching, two men, who appeared in deep conversation, seemed, from time to time, to watch his motions; for, as their station was much more elevated, they could remark him at considerable distance.

The age of the young traveller might be about nineteen, or betwixt that and twenty, and his face and person, which were very prepossessing, did not, however, belong to the country in which he was now a sojourner. His short gray cloak and hose were rather of Flemish than of French fashion, while the smart blue bonnet, with a single sprig of holly and an eagle's feather, was already recognized as the Scottish head-gear. His dress was very neat, and arranged with the precision of a youth conscious of possessing a fine person. He had at his back a satchell, which seemed to contain a few necessaries, a hawking gauntlet on his left hand, though he carried no bird, and in his right a stout hunter's pole. Over his left shoulder hung an embroidered scarf which sustained a small pouch of scarlet velvet, such as was then used by fowlers of distinction to carry their hawks' food, and other matters belonging to that much admired sport. This was crossed by another shoulder-belt, which sustained a hunting knife, or couteau de chasse.

Instead of the boots of the period, he wore buskins of half-dressed deer's-skin.

Although his form had not yet attained its full strength, he was tall and active, and the lightness of the step with which he advanced shewed that his pedestrian mode of travelling was pleasure rather than pain to him. His complexion was fair, in spite of a general shade of darker hue, with which the foreign sun, or perhaps constant exposure to the atmosphere in his own country, had, in some degree, embrowned it.

His features, without being quite regular, were frank, open, and pleasing. A half smile, which seemed to arise from a happy exuberance of animal spirits, shewed, now and then, that his teeth were well set, and as pure as ivory; whilst his bright blue eye, with a corresponding gaiety, had an appropriate glance for every object which it encountered, expressing good humour, lightness of heart, and determined resolution.

He received and returned the salutation of the few travellers who frequented the road in these dangerous times, with the action which suited each. The strolling spearman, half-soldier, half-brigand, measured the youth with his eye, as if balancing the prospect of booty with the chance of desperate resistance; and read such a prospect of the latter in the fearless glance of the passenger, that he changed his ruffian purpose for a surly "Good mor-

row, comrade," which the young Scot answered with as martial, though a less sullen tone. The wandering pilgrim, or the begging friar, answered his reverend greeting with a paternal benedicite; and the dark-eyed peasant girl looked after him for many a step when they had passed each other, and interchanged a laughing good morrow. In short, there was some attraction about his whole appearance not easily escaping attention, and which it derived from the combination of fearless frankness and good humour, with sprightly looks, and a handsome face and person. It seemed, too, as if his whole appearance bespoke one who was entering on life with no apprehension of the evils with which it is beset, and not much means of struggling with its hardships, excepting a lively spirit and a courageous disposition; and it is with such tempers that youth most readily sympathizes, and for whom age and experience feel affectionate and pitying interest.

The youth whom we have described, had been long visible to the two persons who loitered on the opposite side of the small river which divided him from the park and the castle; but as he descended the rugged bank to the water's edge, with the light step of a roe which visits the fountain, the younger of the two said to the other, "It is our man—it is the Bohemian! If he attempts to cross the ford, he is a lost man—the water is up, and the ford impassable."

"Let him make that discovery himself, gossip," said the elder personage; "it may, perchance, save a rope, and break a proverb."

"I judge him by the blue cap," said the other, "for I cannot see his face.—Hark, sir—he hallooes to know whether the water be deep."

"Nothing like experience in this world," answered the other—"let him try."

The young man, in the meanwhile, receiving no hint to the contrary, and taking the silence of those to whom he applied as an encouragement to proceed, entered the stream without farther hesitation than the delay necessary to take off his buskins. The elder person, at the same moment, hallooed to him to beware, adding, in a lower tone, to his companion, "*Mortdieu*—gossip—you have made another mistake—this is not the Bohemian chatterer."

But the intimation to the youth came too late. He did either not hear or could not profit by it, being already in the deep stream. To one less alert, and practised in the exercise of swimming, death had been certain, for the brook was both deep and strong.

"By Saint Anne! but he is a proper youth," said the elder man—"Run, gossip, and help your blunder, by giving him aid, if thou canst. He belongs to thine own troop—if old saws speak truth, water will not drown him."

Indeed, the young traveller swam so strongly, and buffeted the waves so well, that, notwithstand-

ing the strength of the current, he was carried but a little way down from the ordinary landing place.

By this time the younger of the two strangers was hurrying down to the shore to render assistance, while the other followed him at a graver pace, saying to himself as he approached, "I knew water would never drown that young fellow.—By my halidome, he is ashore, and grasps his pole—If I make not the more haste, he will beat my gossip for the only charitable action which I ever saw him perform in his life."

There was some reason to augur such a conclusion of the adventure, for the bonny Scot had already accosted the younger Samaritan, who was hastening to his assistance, with these ireful words—"Discourteous dog! why did you not answer when I called to know if the passage was fit to be attempted? May the foul fiend catch me, but I will teach you the respect due to strangers on the next occasion."

This was accompanied with that significant flourish with his pole which is called *le moulinet*, because the artist, holding it in the middle, brandishes the two ends in every direction, like the sails of a windmill in motion. His opponent, seeing himself thus menaced, laid hand upon his sword, for he was one of those who on all occasions are more ready for action than for speech; but his more considerate comrade, who came up, command-

ed him to forbear, and, turning to the young man, accused him in turn of precipitation in plunging into the swollen ford, and of intemperate violence in quarrelling with a man who was hastening to his assistance.

The young man, on hearing himself thus reproved by a man of advanced age and respectable appearance, immediately lowered his weapon, and said he would be sorry if he had done them injustice; but, in reality, it appeared to him as if they had suffered him to put his life in peril for want of a word of timely warning, which could be the part neither of honest men nor of good Christians, far less of respectable burgesses, such as they seemed to be.

"Fair son," said the elder person, "you seem, from your accent and complexion, a stranger; and you should recollect your dialect is not so easily comprehended by us, as perhaps it may be uttered by you."

"Well, father," answered the youth, "I do not care much about the ducking I have had, and I will readily forgive your being partly the cause, providing you will direct me to some place where I can have my clothes dried; for it is my only suit, and I must keep it somewhat decent."

"For whom do you take us, fair son?" said the elder stranger, in answer to this question.

"For substantial burgesses, unquestionably,"

said the youth; "or, hold—you, master, may be a money-broker, or a corn-merchant; and this man a butcher, or grazier."

"You have hit our capacities rarely," said the elder, smiling. "My business is indeed to deal in as much money as I can; and my gossip's dealings are somewhat of kin to the butcher's. As to your accommodation, we will try to serve you; but I must first know who you are, and whither you are going; for, in these times, the roads are filled with travellers on foot and horseback, who have anything in their head but honesty and the fear of God."

The young man cast another keen and penetrating glance on him who spoke, and on his silent companion, as if doubtful whether they, on their part, merited the confidence they demanded; and the result of his observation was as follows.

The eldest, and most remarkable of these men in dress and appearance, resembled the merchant or shopkeeper of the period. His jerkin, hose, and cloak, were of a dark uniform colour, but worn so threadbare, that the acute young Scot conceived, that the wearer must be either very rich or very poor, probably the former. The fashion of the dress was close and short—a kind of garments which were not then held decorous among gentry, or even the superior class of citizens, who generally wore loose gowns which descended below the middle of the leg.

The expression of this man's countenance was partly attractive, and partly forbidding. His strong features, sunk cheeks, and hollow eyes, had, nevertheless, an expression of shrewdness and humour congenial to the character of the young adventurer. But then, those same sunken eyes, from under the shroud of thick black eyebrows, had something that was at once commanding and sinister. Perhaps this effect was increased by the low fur cap, much depressed on the forehead, and adding to the shade from under which those eyes peered out; but it is certain that the young stranger had some difficulty to reconcile his looks with the meanness of his appearance in other respects. His cap, in particular, in which all men of any quality displayed either a brooch of gold or of silver, was ornamented with a paltry image of the Virgin, in lead, such as the poorer sort of pilgrims bring from Loretto.

His comrade was a stout-formed, middle-sized man, more than ten years younger than his companion, with a down-looking visage, and a very ominous smile, when by chance he gave way to that impulse, which was never, except in reply to certain secret signs that seemed to pass between him and the elder stranger. This man was armed with a sword and dagger; and, underneath his plain habit, the Scotsman observed that he concealed a *jazeran*, or flexible shirt of linked mail, which, as being often worn by those, even of peaceful profes-

sions, who were called upon at this perilous period to be frequently abroad, confirmed the young man in his conjecture, that the wearer was by profession a butcher, grazier, or something of that description.

The young stranger, comprehending in one glance the result of the observation which has taken us some time to express, answered, after a moment's pause, "I do not know whom I may have the honour to address," making a slight reverence at the same time, "but I am indifferent who knows that I am a cadet of Scotland; and that I come to seek my fortune in France, or elsewhere, after the custom of my countrymen."

"*Pasques-dieu!* and a gallant custom it is," said the elder stranger. "You seem a fine young springald, and at the right age to prosper, whether among men or women. What say you? I am a merchant, and want a lad to assist in my traffic—I suppose you are too much a gentleman to assist in such mechanical drudgery?"

"Fair sir," said the youth, "if your offer be seriously made—of which I have my doubts—I am bound to thank you for it, and I thank you accordingly; but I fear I should be altogether unfit for your service."

"What! I warrant thou knowest better how to draw the bow, than how to draw a bill of charges,—canst handle a broadsword better than a pen—ha!"

"I am, master," answered the young Scot, "a braeman, and therefore, as we say, a bowman. But I have been in a convent, where the good fathers taught me to read and write, and even to cypher."

"*Pasques-dieu!* that is too magnificent," said the merchant. "By our Lady of Embrun, thou art a prodigy, man!"

"Rest you merry, fair master," said the youth, who was not much pleased with his new acquaintance's jocularity, "I must go dry myself, instead of standing dripping here, answering questions."

The merchant only laughed louder as he spoke, and answered, "*Pasques-dieu!* the proverb never fails—*fier comme un Ecossois*—but come, youngster, you are of a country I have a regard for, having traded in Scotland in my time—an honest poor set of folks they are; and, if you will come with us to the village, I will bestow on you a cup of burnt sack and a warm breakfast, to atone for your drenching.—But, *tête-bleau!* what do you with a hunting-glove on your hand? Know you not there is no hawking permitted in the royal chase?"

"I was taught that by a rascally forester of the Duke of Burgundy. I did but fly the falcon I had brought with me from Scotland, and that I reckoned on for bringing me into some note, at a heron near Peronne, and the rascally schelm shot my bird with an arrow."

"What did you do?" said the merchant.

"Beat him," said the youngster, brandishing his staff, "as near to death as a Christian man should belabour another; for I wanted not to have his blood to answer."

"Know you, that had you fallen into the Duke of Burgundy's hands, he would have hung you up like a chesnut?"

"Ay, I am told he is as prompt as the King of France for that sort of work. But, as this happened near Peronne, I made a leap over the frontiers, and laughed at him. If he had not been so hasty, I might perhaps have taken service with him."

"He will have a heavy miss of such a paladin as you are, if the truce should break off," said the merchant, and threw a look at his companion, who answered him with one of the downcast lowering smiles, which gleamed along his countenance, enlivening it as a passing meteor enlivens a winter sky.

The young Scot suddenly stopped, pulled his bonnet over his right eyebrow, as one that would not be ridiculed, and said firmly, "My masters, and especially you, sir, the elder, and who should be the wiser, you will find, I presume, no wise or safe jesting at my expense. I do not altogether like the tone of your conversation. I can take a jest with any man, and a rebuke, too, from my elder, and say thank you, sir, if I know it to be deserved; but I do not like being borne in hand

as if I were a child, when, God wot, I find myself man enough to belabour you both, if you provoke me too far."

The eldest man seemed like to choke with laughter at the lad's demeanour—his companion's hand stole to his sword-hilt, which the youth observing, dealt him a blow across the wrist, which made him incapable of grasping it; while his companion's mirth was only increased by the incident. "Hold, hold," he cried, "most doughty Scotchman, even for thine own dear country's sake; and you, gossip, forbear your menacing look. *Pasques-dieu!* let us be just traders, and set off the wetting against the knock on the wrist, which was given with so much grace and alacrity.—And hark ye, friend," he said to the young man, with a grave sternness, which, in spite of all the youth could do, damped and overawed him, "no more violence. I am no fit object for it, and my gossip, as you may see, has had enough of it. Let me know your name."

"I can answer a civil question civilly," said the youth; "and will pay fitting respect to your age, if you do not urge my patience with mockery. Since I have been here in France and Flanders, men have called me, in their fantasy, the Varlet with the Velvet Pouch, because of this hawk-purse which I carry by my side; but my true name, when at home, is Quentin Durward."

"Durward!" said the querist; "is it a gentleman's name?"

"By fifteen descents in our family," said the young man; "and that makes me reluctant to follow any other trade than arms.'

"A true Scot! Plenty of blood, plenty of pride, and right great scarcity of ducats, I warrant thee.—Well, gossip," he said to his companion, "go before us, and tell them to have some breakfast ready yonder at the Mulberry-grove; for this youth will do as much honour to it as a starved mouse to a housewife's cheese. And for the Bohemian—hark in thy ear——"

His comrade answered by a gloomy, but intelligent smile, and set forward at a round pace, while the elder man continued, addressing young Durward,—"You and I will push forward together, and we may take a mass at Saint Hubert's Chapel in our way through the forest; for it is not good to think of our fleshly before our spiritual wants."

Durward, as a good Catholic, had nothing to object against this proposal, although he would probably have been desirous, in the first place, to have dried his clothes and refreshed himself. Meanwhile, they soon lost sight of their downward-looking companion, but continued to follow the same path which he had taken, until it led them into a wood of tall trees, mixed with thickets and brush-wood, traversed by long avenues, through which were seen,

as through a vista, the deer trotting in little herds, with a degree of security which argued their consciousness of being completely protected.

"You asked me if I were a good bowman," said the young Scot—"Give me a bow and a brace of shafts, and you shall have a piece of venison."

"*Pasques-dieu!* my young friend," said his companion, "take care of that; my gossip yonder hath a special eye to the deer; they are under his charge, and he is a strict keeper."

"He hath more the air of a butcher, than of a gay forester," answered Durward. "I cannot think yon hang-dog look of his belongs to any one who knows the gentle rules of wood-craft."

"Ah, my young friend," answered his companion, "my gossip hath somewhat an ugly favour to look upon at the first; but those who become acquainted with him, never are known to complain of him."

Quentin Durward found something singularly and disagreeably significant in the tone with which this was spoken; and, looking suddenly at the speaker, thought he saw in his countenance, in the slight smile that curled his upper lip, and the accompanying twinkle of his keen dark eye, something to justify his unpleasing surprise. "I have heard of robbers," he thought to himself, "and of wily cheats and cut-throats—what if yonder fellow be a murderer, and this old rascal his decoy-duck? I

will be on my guard—they will get little by me but good Scottish knocks."

While he was thus reflecting, they came to a glade, where the large forest trees were more widely separated from each other, and where the ground beneath, cleared of underwood and bushes, was clothed with a carpet of the softest and most lovely verdure, which, screened from the scorching heat of the sun, was here more beautifully tender than it is usually to be seen in France. The trees in this secluded spot were chiefly beeches and elms of huge magnitude, which rose like great hills of leaves into the air. Amidst these magnificent sons of the earth, there peeped out, in the most open spot of the glade, a lowly chapel, near which trickled a small rivulet. Its architecture was of the rudest and most simple kind; and there was a very small lodge beside it, for the accommodation of a hermit or solitary priest, who remained there for regularly discharging the duty of the altar. In a small niche, over the arched door-way, stood a stone image of Saint Hubert, with the bugle-horn around his neck, and a leash of greyhounds at his feet. The situation of the chapel in the midst of a park or chase, so richly stocked with game, made the dedication to the Sainted Huntsman peculiarly appropriate.

Towards this little devotional structure the old man directed his steps, followed by young Durward; and, as they approached, the priest, dressed

in his sacerdotal garments, made his appearance, in the act of proceeding from his cell to the chapel, for the discharge, doubtless, of his holy office. Durward bowed his body reverently to the priest, as the respect due to his sacred office demanded; whilst his companion, with an appearance of still more deep devotion, kneeled on one knee to receive the holy man's blessing, and then followed him into church, with a step and manner expressive of the most heartfelt contrition and humility.

The inside of the chapel was adorned in a manner adapted to the occupation of the patron-saint while on earth. The richest furs of animals which are made the objects of the chase in different countries, supplied the place of tapestry and hangings around the altar and elsewhere, and the characteristic emblazonments of bugles, bows, quivers, and other emblems of hunting, surrounded the walls, and were mingled with the heads of deer, wolves, and other animals considered beasts of sport. The whole adornments took a sylvan character; and the mass itself, being considerably shortened, proved to be of that sort which is called a *hunting-mass*, because in use before the noble and powerful, who, while assisting at the solemnity, are usually impatient to commence their favourite sport.

Yet, during this brief ceremony, Durward's companion seemed to pay the most rigid and scrupulous attention; while his younger companion, not quite

so much occupied with religious thoughts, could not forbear blaming himself in his own mind, for having entertained suspicions derogatory to the character of so good and so humble a man. Far from now holding him as a companion and accomplice of robbers, he had much to do to forbear regarding him as a saint-like personage.

When mass was ended, they retired together from the chapel, and the elder said to his young comrade, "It is but a short walk from hence to the village—you may now break your fast with an unprejudiced conscience—follow me."

Turning to the right, and proceeding along a path which seemed gradually to ascend, he desired his companion by no means to quit the track, but, on the contrary, to keep the middle of it as nearly as he could. Durward could not help asking the cause of this precaution.

"You are now near the Court, young man," answered his guide; "and, *Pasques-dieu!* there is some difference betwixt walking in this region and on your own heathy hills. Every yard of this ground, excepting the path which we now occupy, is rendered dangerous, and well nigh impracticable, by snares and traps, armed with scythe-blades, which shred off the unwary passenger's limb as sheerly as a hedge-bill lops a hawthorn-sprig—and calthrops that would pierce your foot through, and pit-falls deep enough to bury you in for ever; for you are

now within the precincts of the royal demesne, and we shall presently see the front of the Chateau."

"Were I the King of France," said the young man, "I would not take so much trouble with traps and gins, but would try instead to govern so well, that no man should dare to come near my dwelling with a bad intent; and for those who came there in peace and good will, why, the more of them the merrier we should be."

His companion looked round with an alarmed gaze, and said, "Hush, hush, Sir Varlet with the Velvet Pouch! for I forgot to tell you, that one great danger of these precincts is, that the very leaves of the trees are like so many ears, which carry all which is spoken to the King's own cabinet."

"I care little for that," answered Quentin Durward; "I bear a Scottish tongue in my head, bold enough to speak my mind to King Louis's face, God bless him—and, for the ears you talk of, if I could see them growing on a human head, I would crop them out of it with my wood-knife."

CHAP. III.

THE CASTLE.

Full in the midst a mighty pile arose,
Where iron-grated gates their strength oppose
To each invading step—and, strong and steep,
The battled walls arose, the fosse sunk deep.
Slow round the fortress roll'd the sluggish stream,
And high in middle air the warder's turrets gleam.

Anonymous.

WHILE Durward and his new acquaintance thus spoke, they came in sight of the whole front of the Castle of Plessis-les-Tours, which, even in those dangerous times, when the great found themselves obliged to reside within places of fortified strength, was distinguished for the extreme and jealous care with which it was watched and defended.

From the verge of the wood where young Durward halted with his companion, in order to take a view of this royal residence, extended, or rather arose, though by a very gentle elevation, an open esplanade, clear of trees and bushes of every description, excepting one gigantic and half-withered old oak. This space was left open, according to the

rules of fortification in all ages, in order that an enemy might not approach the walls under cover, or unobserved from the battlements, and beyond it arose the Castle itself.

There were three external walls, battlemented and turretted from space to space, and at each angle, the second enclosure rising higher than the first, and being built so as to command it in case it was won by the enemy; and being again, in the same manner, commanded by the third and innermost barrier. Around the external wall, as the Frenchman informed his young companion, (for, as they stood lower than the foundation of the wall, he could not see it,) was sunk a ditch of about twenty feet in depth, supplied with water by a dam-head on the river Cher, or rather on one of its tributary branches. In front of the second enclosure, he said, there ran another fosse, and a third, both of the same unusual dimensions, was led between the second and the innermost enclosure. The verge, both of the outer and inner circuit of this triple moat, was strongly fenced with palisades of iron, serving the purpose of what are called *chevaux-de-frise* in modern fortification, the top of each pale being divided into a cluster of sharp spikes, which seemed to render any attempt to climb over an act of self-destruction.

From within the innermost enclosure arose the Castle itself, containing buildings of different periods, crowded around, and united with the ancient

and grim-looking donjon-keep, which was older than any of them, and which rose, like a black Ethiopian giant, high into the air, while the absence of any windows larger than shot-holes, irregularly disposed for defence, gave the spectator the same unpleasant feeling which we experience on looking on a blind man. The other buildings seemed scarcely better adapted for the purposes of comfort, for what windows they had opened to an internal court-yard; so that the whole external front looked much more like that of a prison than that of a palace. The reigning King had even increased this effect; for, desirous that the additions which he himself made to the fortifications should be of a character not easily distinguished from the original building, (for, like many jealous persons, he loved not that his suspicions should be observed,) the darkest-coloured brick and freestone were employed, and soot mingled with the lime, so as to give the whole Castle the same uniform tinge of extreme and rude antiquity.

This formidable place had but one entrance, at least Durward saw none along the spacious front, except where, in the centre of the first and outward boundary, arose two strong towers, the usual defences of a gateway; and they could observe their ordinary accompaniments, portcullis and drawbridge—of which the first was lowered, and the last raised. Similar entrance-towers were visible on the

second and third bounding wall, but not in the same line with those on the outward circuit; because the passage did not cut right through the whole three enclosures at the same point, but, on the contrary, those who entered had to proceed nearly thirty yards betwixt the first and second wall, exposed, if their purpose were hostile, to missiles from both; and again, when the second boundary was passed, they must make a second digression from the straight line, in order to attain the portal of the third and innermost enclosure; so that before gaining the outer court, which ran along the front of the building, two narrow and dangerous defiles were to be traversed, under a flanking discharge of artillery, and three gates, defended in the strongest manner known to the age, were to be successively forced.

Coming from a country alike desolated by foreign war and internal feuds,—a country, too, whose unequal and mountainous surface, abounding in precipices and torrents, affords so many situations of strength,—young Durward was sufficiently acquainted with all the various contrivances by which men, in that stern age, endeavoured to secure their dwellings; but he frankly owned to his companion, that he did not think it had been in the power of art to do so much for defence, where nature had done so little; for the situation, as we have hinted, was merely the summit of a gentle elevation,

ascending upwards from the place where they were standing.

To enhance his surprise, his companion told him that the environs of the Castle, except the single winding path by which the portal might be safely approached, were, like the thickets through which they had passed, surrounded with every species of hidden pit-fall, snare, and gin, to entrap the wretch who should venture thither without a guide; that upon the walls were constructed certain cradles of iron, called *swallows' nests*, from which the sentinels, who were regularly posted there, could take deliberate aim at any who should attempt to enter without the proper signal or pass-word of the day; and that the Archers of the Royal Guard performed that duty day and night, for which they received high pay, rich clothing, and much honour and profit at the hands of King Louis. "And now tell me, young man," he continued, "did you ever see so strong a fortress, and do you think there are men bold enough to storm it?"

The young man looked long and fixedly on the place, the sight of which interested him so much, that he had forgotten, in the eagerness of youthful curiosity, the wetness of his dress. His eye glanced, and his colour mounted to his cheek like that of a daring man who meditates an honourable action, as he replied, "It is a strong castle, and

strongly guarded; but there is no impossibility to brave men."

"Are there any in your country who could do such a feat?" said the elder, rather scornfully.

"I will not affirm that," answered the youth; "but there are thousands that, in a good cause, would attempt as bold a deed."

"Umph!"—said the senior, "perhaps you are yourself such a gallant?"

"I should sin if I were to boast where there is no danger," answered young Durward; "but my father has done as bold an act, and I trust I am no bastard."

"Well," said his companion, smiling, "you might meet your match, and your kindred withal in the attempt; for the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Life-guards stand sentinels on yonder walls —three hundred gentlemen of the best blood in your country."

"And were I King Louis," said the youth, in reply, "I would trust myself to the three hundred Scottish gentlemen, throw down my bounding walls to fill up the moat, call in my noble peers and paladins, and live as became me, amid breaking of lances in gallant tournaments, and feasting of days with nobles, and dancing of nights with ladies, and have no more fear of a foe than I have of a fly."

His companion again smiled, and turning his

back on the Castle, which, he observed, they had approached a little too nearly, he led the way again into the wood, by a more broad and beaten path, than they had yet trodden. "This," he said, "leads us to the village of Plessis, as it is called, where you, as a stranger, will find reasonable and honest accommodation. About two miles onward lies the fine city of Tours, which gives name to this rich and beautiful earldom. But the village of Plessis, or Plessis of the Park, as it is sometimes called, from its vicinity to the royal residence, and the chase with which it is encircled, will yield you nearer, and as convenient hospitality."

"I thank you, kind master, for your information," said the Scot; "but my stay will be so short here, that so I fail not in a morsel of meat, and a drink of something better than water, my necessities in Plessis, be it of the park or the pool, will be amply satisfied."

"Nay," answered his companion, "I thought you had some friend to see in this quarter."

"And so I have—my mother's own brother," answered Durward; "and as pretty a man, before he left the braes of Angus, as ever planted brogue on heather."

"What is his name?" said the senior; "we will inquire him out for you; for it is not safe for you to go up to the Castle, where you might be taken for a spy."

"Now, by my father's hand!" said the youth, "I taken for a spy!—By heaven, he shall brook cold iron that brands me with such a charge!—But for my uncle's name, I care not who knows it—it is Lesly. Lesly—an honest and noble name."

"And so it is, I doubt not," said the old man; "but there are three of the name in the Scottish Guard."

"My uncle's name is Ludovic Lesly," said the young man.

"Of the three Leslies," answered the merchant, "two are called Ludovic."

"They call my kinsman Ludovic with the Scar," said Quentin.—"Our family names are so common in a Scottish house, that, where there is no land in the case, we always give a *to-name*."

"A *nomme de guerre*, I suppose you to mean," answered his companion; "and the man you speak of, we, I think, call *Le Balafré*, from that scar on his face—a proper man, and a good soldier. I wish I may be able to help you to an interview with him, for he belongs to a set of gentlemen whose duty is strict, and who do not often come out of garrison, unless in the immediate attendance on the King's person.—And now, young man, answer me one question. I will wager you are desirous to take service with your uncle in the Scottish Guard. It is a great thing, if you propose so; especially as

you are very young, and some years' experience is necessary for the high office which you aim at."

"Perhaps I may have thought on some such thing," said Durward, carelessly; "but if I did, the fancy is off."

"How so, young man?" said the Frenchman, something sternly—"Do you speak thus of a charge which the most noble of your countrymen feel themselves emulous to be admitted to?"

"I wish them joy of it," said Quentin, composedly.—"To speak plain, I should have liked the service of the French King full well; only, dress me as fine, and feed me as high as you will, I love the open air better than being shut up in a cage or a swallow's nest yonder, as you call these same grated pepper-boxes. Besides," he added, in a lower voice, "to speak truth, I love not the Castle when the covin-tree bears such acorns as I see yonder."

"I guess what you mean," said the Frenchman; "but speak yet more plainly."

"To speak more plainly, then," said the youth, "there grows a fair oak some flight-shot or so from yonder Castle—and on that oak hangs a man in a grey jerkin, such as this which I wear."

"Ay and indeed!" said the man of France—"*Pasques-dieu!* see what it is to have youthful eyes! Why, I did see something, but only took it for a raven among the branches. But the sight is

no way strange, young man; when the summer fades into autumn, and moonlight nights are long, and roads become unsafe, you will see a cluster of ten, ay of twenty such acorns, hanging on that old doddered oak.—But what then?—they are so many banners displayed to scare knaves; and for each rogue that hangs there, an honest man may reckon that there is a thief, a traitor, a robber on the highway, a pillour and oppressor of the people, the fewer in France. These, young man, are signs of our Sovereign's justice."

"I would have hung them farther from my palace, though, were I King Louis," said the youth.—"In my country we hang up dead corbies where living corbies haunt, but not in our gardens or pigeon-houses. The very scent of the carrion—fough—reached my nostrils at the distance where we stood."

"If you live to be an honest and loyal servant of your Prince, my good youth," answered the Frenchman, "you will know there is no perfume to match the scent of a dead traitor."

"I shall never wish to live till I lose the scent of my nostrils or the sight of my eyes," said the Scot.—"Shew me a living traitor, and here are my hand and my weapon; but when life is out, hatred should not live longer.—But here, I fancy, we come upon the village; where I hope to shew you that neither ducking nor disgust have spoiled mine ap-

petite for my breakfast. So, my good friend, to the hostelrie, with all the speed you may.—Yet, ere I accept of your hospitality, let me know by what name to call you."

"Men call me Maitre Pierre," answered his companion.—"I deal in no titles. A plain man, that can live on mine own good—that is my designation."

"So be it, Maitre Pierre," said Quentin, "and I am happy my good chance has thrown us together; for I want a word of seasonable advice, and can be thankful for it."

While they spoke thus, the tower of the church, and a tall wooden crucifix, rising above the trees, shewed that they were at the entrance of the village.

But Maitre Pierre, deflecting a little from the road, which had now joined an open and public causeway, said to his companion, that the inn to which he intended to introduce him stood somewhat secluded, and received only the better sort of travellers.

"If you mean those who travel with the better-filled purses," answered the Scot, "I am none of the number, and will rather stand my chance of your flayers on the highway, than of your flayers in the hostelry."

"*Pasques-dieu!*" said his guide, "how cautious your countrymen of Scotland are! An English-

man, now, throws himself headlong into a tavern, eats and drinks of the best, and never thinks of the reckoning till his belly is full. But you forget, Master Quentin, since Quentin is your name, you forget I owe you a breakfast for the wetting which my mistake procured you—It is the penance of my offence towards you."

"In truth," said the light-hearted young man, "I had forgot wetting, offence, and penance and all. I have walked my clothes dry, or nearly so, and I will not refuse your offer in kindness; for my dinner yesterday was a light one, and supper I had none. You seem an old and respectable burgess, and I see no reason why I should not accept your courtesy."

The Frenchman smiled aside, for he saw plainly that the youth, while he was probably half-famished, had yet some difficulty to reconcile himself to the thoughts of feeding upon a stranger's cost, and was endeavouring to subdue his inward pride by the reflection, that, in such slight obligations, the acceptor performed as complaisant a part as he by whom the courtesy was offered.

In the meanwhile, they descended a narrow lane, overshadowed by tall elms, at the bottom of which a gate-way admitted them into the court-yard of an inn of unusual magnitude, calculated for the accommodation of the nobles and suitors who had business at the neighbouring Castle, where very sel-

dom, and only when such hospitality was altogether unavoidable, did Louis XI. permit any of his Court to have apartments. A scutcheon, bearing the *fleur-de-lys*, hung over the principal door of the large irregular building; but there was about the yard and the offices little or none of the bustle which in those days, when attendants were maintained both in public and in private houses, marked that business was alive, and custom plenty. It seemed as if the stern and unsocial character of the royal mansion in the neighbourhood had communicated a portion of its solemn and terrific gloom even to a place designed for the temple of social indulgence, merry society, and good cheer.

Maitre Pierre, without calling any one, and even without approaching the principal entrance, lifted the latch of a side door, and led the way into a large room, where a faggot was blazing on the hearth, and arrangements made for a substantial breakfast.

"My gossip has been careful," said the Frenchman to the Scot—"You must be cold, and I have commanded a fire; you must be hungry, and you shall have breakfast presently."

He whistled, and the landlord entered,—answered his *bon jour* with a reverence,—but in no respect shewed any part of the prating humour properly belonging to a French publican of all ages.

"I expected a gentleman," said Maitre Pierre, "to order breakfast—Hath he done so?"

In answer, the landlord only bowed; and while he continued to bring, and arrange upon the table, the various articles of a comfortable meal, omitted to extol their merits by a single word. And yet the breakfast merited such eulogiums as French hosts are wont to confer upon their regales, as the reader will be informed in the next Chapter.

CHAP. IV.

THE DEJEUNER.

> Sacred heaven! what masticators! what bread!
> *Yorick's Travels.*

We left our young stranger in France, situated more comfortably than he had found himself since entering the territories of the ancient Gauls. The breakfast, as we hinted in the conclusion of the last Chapter, was admirable. There was a *paté de Perigord*, over which a gastronome would have wished to live and die, like Homer's lotus-eaters, forgetful of kin, native country, and all social obligations whatsoever. Its vast walls of magnificent crust seemed raised like the bulwarks of some rich metropolitan city, an emblem of the wealth which they are designed to protect. There was a delicate ragout, with just that *petit point de l'ail* which Gascons love, and Scotchmen do not hate. There was, besides, a delicate ham, which had once supported a noble wild boar in the neighbouring wood of Mountrichart. There was the most delicate

white bread, made into little round loaves called *boules*, (whence the bakers took their French name of *boulangers*,) of which the crust was so inviting, that, even with water alone, it would have been a delicacy. But the water was not alone, for there was a flask of leather called *bottrine*, which contained about a quart of exquisite *Vin de Beaulne*. So many good things might have created appetite under the ribs of death. What effect, then, must they have produced upon a youngster of scarce twenty, who (for the truth must be told) had eaten little for the two last days, save the scarcely ripe fruit which chance afforded him an opportunity of plucking, and a very moderate portion of barley-bread. He threw himself upon the ragout, and the plate was presently vacant—he attacked the mighty pasty, marched deep into the bowels of the land, and, seasoning his enormous meal with an occasional cup of wine, returned to the charge again and again, to the astonishment of mine host, and the amusement of Maitre Pierre.

The latter, indeed, probably because he found himself the author of a kinder action than he had thought of, seemed delighted with the appetite of the young Scot; and when, at length, he observed that his exertions began to languish, endeavoured to stimulate him to new efforts, by ordering confections, *darioles*, and any other light dainties he could think of, to entice the youth to continue his

meal. While thus engaged, Maitre Pierre's countenance expressed a kind of good humour almost amounting to benevolence, which appeared remote from its ordinary sharp, caustic, and severe character. The aged almost always sympathize with the enjoyments of youth, and with its exertions of every kind, when the mind of the spectator rests on its natural poise, and is not disturbed by inward envy or idle emulation.

Quentin Durward also, while thus agreeably employed, could do no otherwise than discover that the countenance of his entertainer, which he had at first found so unprepossessing, mended when it was seen under the influence of the *Vin de Beaulne*, and there was kindness in the tone with which he reproached Maitre Pierre, that he amused himself with laughing at his appetite, without eating anything himself.

"I am doing penance," said Maitre Pierre, "and may not eat anything before noon, save some comfiture and a cup of water.—Bid yonder lady," he added, turning to the inn-keeper, "bring them hither to me."

The inn-keeper left the room, and Maitre Pierre proceeded,—"Well, have I kept faith with you concerning the breakfast I promised you?"

"The best meal I have eaten," said the youth, "since I left Glen-houlakin."

"Glen—what?" demanded Maitre Pierre; "are

you going to raise the devil, that you use such long-tailed words?"

"Glen-houlakin, which is to say the Glen of the Midges, is the name of our ancient patrimony, my good sir. You have bought the right to laugh at the sound, if you please."

"I have not the least intention to offend," said the old man; "but I was about to say, since you like your present meal so well, that the Scottish Archers of the guard eat as good a one, or a better, every day."

"No wonder," said Durward, "for if they are shut up in the *swallows' nests* all night, they must needs have a curious appetite in the morning."

"And plenty to gratify it upon," said Maitre Pierre. "They need not, like the Burgundians, choose a bare back, that they may have a full belly —they dress like counts, and feast like abbots."

"It is well for them," said Durward.

"And wherefore will you not take service here, young man? Your uncle might, I dare say, have you placed on the file when there should a vacancy occur. And, hark in your ear, I myself have some little interest, and might be of some use to you. You can ride, I presume, as well as draw the bow?"

"Our race are as good horsemen as ever put a plated shoe into a steel stirrup; and I know not but I might accept of your kind offer. Yet, look you, food and raiment are needful things, but, in

my case, men think of honour, and advancement, and brave deeds of arms. Your King Louis—God bless him, for he is a friend and ally of Scotland—but he lies here in this castle, or only rides about from one fortified town to another; and gains cities and provinces by politic embassies, and not in fair fighting. Now, for me, I am of the Douglases' mind, who always kept the fields, because they loved better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak."

"Young man," said Maitre Pierre, "do not judge too rashly of the actions of sovereigns. Louis seeks to spare the blood of his subjects, and cares not for his own. He shewed himself a man of courage at Montlhéry."

"Ay, but that was some dozen years ago or more," answered the youth.—"I should like to follow a master that would keep his honour as bright as his shield, and always venture foremost in the very throng of the battle."

"Why did you not tarry at Brussels, then, with the Duke of Burgundy? He would put you in the way to have your bones broken every day; and, rather than fail, would do the job for you himself—especially if he heard that you had beaten his forester."

"Very true," said Quentin; "my unhappy chance has shut that door against me."

"Nay, there are plenty of dare-devils abroad, with whom mad youngsters may find service," said

his adviser. "What think you, for example, of William de la Marck?"

"What!" exclaimed Durward, "serve Him with the Beard—serve the wild Boar of Ardennes—a captain of pillagers and murderers, who would take a man's life for the value of his gaberdine, and who slays priests and pilgrims as if they were so many lance-knights and men-at-arms? It would be a blot on my father's scutcheon for ever."

"Well, my young hot-blood," replied Maitre Pierre, "if you hold the *Sanglier* too unscrupulous, wherefore not follow the young Duke of Gueldres?"

"Follow the foul fiend as soon," said Quentin. "Hark in your ear—he is a burthen too heavy for earth to carry—hell gapes for him! Men say that he keeps his own father imprisoned, and that he has even struck him—Can you believe it?"

Maitre Pierre seemed somewhat disconcerted with the naive horror with which the young Scotchman spoke of filial ingratitude, and he answered, "You know not, young man, how short a while the relations of blood subsist amongst those of elevated rank;" then changed the tone of feeling in which he had begun to speak, and added, gaily, "besides, if the Duke has beaten his father, I warrant you, his father hath beaten him of old, so it is but a clearing of scores."

"I marvel to hear you speak thus," said the

Scotchman, colouring with indignation; "gray hairs such as yours ought to have fitter subjects for jesting. If the old Duke did beat his son in childhood, he beat him not enough; for better he had died under the rod, than have lived to make the Christian world ashamed that such a monster had been ever baptized."

"At this rate," said Maitre Pierre, "as you weigh the characters of each prince and leader, I think you had better become a captain yourself; for where will one so wise find a chieftain fit to command him?"

"You laugh at me, Maitre Pierre," said the youth, good-humouredly, "and perhaps you are right; but you have not named a man who is a gallant leader, and keeps a brave party up here, under whom a man might seek service well enough."

"I cannot guess whom you mean."

"Why he that hangs like Mahomet's coffin (a curse be upon him!) between the two loadstones—he that no man can call either French or Burgundian, but who knows to hold the balance between them both, and makes both of them fear and serve him, for as great princes as they be."

"I cannot guess whom you mean," said Maitre Pierre, thoughtfully.

"Why, whom should I mean but the noble Louis de Luxembourg, Count of Saint Paul, the High Constable of France? Yonder he makes his

place good, with his gallant little army, holding his head as high as either King Louis or Duke Charles, and balancing between them, like the boy who stands on the midst of a plank, while two others are swinging on the opposite ends."

"He is in danger of the worst fall of the three," said Maitre Pierre. "And hark ye, my young friend, you who hold pillaging such a crime, do you know that your politic Count of Saint Paul was the first who set the example of burning the country during the time of war? and that before the shameful devastation which he committed, open towns and villages, which made no resistance, were spared on all sides?"

"Nay, faith," said Durward, "if that be the case, I shall begin to think no one of these great men is much better than another, and that a choice among them is but like choosing a tree to be hung upon. But this Count de Saint Paul, this Constable, hath possessed himself by clean conveyance of the town which takes its name from my honoured saint and patron, Saint Quentin, (here he crossed himself,) and methinks, were I dwelling there, my holy patron would keep some look-out for me—he has not so many named after him as your more popular saints—and yet he must have forgotten me, poor Quentin Durward, his spiritual god-son, since he lets me go one day without food, and leaves me the next morning to the harbourage of Saint Julian,

and the chance courtesy of a stranger, purchased by a ducking in the renowned river Cher, or one of its tributaries."

"Blaspheme not the saints, my young friend," said Maitre Pierre. "Saint Julian is the faithful patron of travellers; and, peradventure, the blessed Saint Quentin hath done more and better for thee than thou art aware of."

As he spoke, the door opened, and a girl, rather above than under fifteen years old, entered with a platter, covered with damask, on which was placed a small saucer of the dried plums which have always added to the reputation of Tours, and a cup of the curiously chased plate which the goldsmiths of that city were anciently famous for executing, with a delicacy of workmanship that distinguished them from the other cities of France, and even excelled the skill of the metropolis. The form of the goblet was so elegant, that Durward thought not of observing closely whether the material was of silver, or, like what had been placed before himself, of a baser metal, but so well burnished as to resemble the richer ore.

But the sight of the young person by whom this service was executed, attracted Durward's attention far more than the petty particulars of the duty which she performed.

He speedily made the discovery, that a quantity of long black tresses, which, in the maiden fashion

of his own country, were unadorned by any ornament, excepting a single chaplet lightly woven out of ivy leaves, formed a veil around a countenance, which, in its regular features, dark eyes, and pensive expression, resembled that of Melpomene, though there was a faint glow on the cheek, and an intelligence on the lips and in the eye, which made it seem that gaiety was not foreign to a countenance so expressive, although it might not be its most habitual expression. Quentin even thought he could discern that depressing circumstances were the cause why a countenance so young and so lovely was graver than belongs to early beauty; and as the romantic imagination of youth is rapid in drawing conclusions from slight premises, he was pleased to infer, from what follows, that the fate of this beautiful vision was wrapped in silence and mystery.

"How now, Jacqueline!" said Maitre Pierre, when she entered the apartment—"Wherefore this? Did I not desire that Dame Perette should bring what I wanted?—*Pasques-dieu!*—Is she, or does she think herself, too good to serve me?"

"My mother is ill at ease," answered Jacqueline, in a hurried yet a humble tone; "ill at ease, and keeps her chamber."

"She keeps it *alone*, I hope?" replied Maitre Pierre, with some emphasis; "I am *vieux routier*, and none of those upon whom feigned disorders pass for apologies."

Jacqueline turned pale, and even tottered at the answer of Maitre Pierre; for it must be owned, that his voice and looks, at all times harsh, caustic, and unpleasing, had, when he expressed anger or suspicion, an effect both sinister and alarming.

The mountain chivalry of Quentin Durward was instantly awakened, and he hastened to approach Jacqueline, and relieve her of the burthen she bore, and which she passively resigned to him, while, with a timid and anxious look, she watched the countenance of the angry burgess. It was not in nature to resist the piercing and pity-craving expression of her looks, and Maitre Pierre proceeded, not merely with an air of diminished displeasure, but with as much gentleness as he could assume in countenance and manner, "I blame not thee, Jacqueline, and thou art too young to be, what it is pity to think thou must be one day—a false and treacherous thing, like the rest of thy giddy sex. No man ever lived to man's estate, but he had the opportunity to know you all. Here is a Scottish cavalier will tell you the same."

Jacqueline looked for an instant on the young stranger, as if to obey Maitre Pierre, but the glance, momentary as it was, appeared to Durward a pathetic appeal to him for support and sympathy; and with the promptitude dictated by the feelings of youth, and the romantic veneration for the female sex inspired by his education, he answered hastily,

"That he would throw down his gage to any antagonist, of equal rank and equal age, who should presume to say such a countenance, as that which he now looked upon, could be animated by other than the purest and the truest mind."

The young woman grew deadly pale, and cast an apprehensive glance upon Maitre Pierre, in whom the bravado of the young gallant seemed only to excite laughter, more scornful than applausive. Quentin, whose second thoughts generally corrected the first, though sometimes after they had found utterance, blushed deeply at having uttered what might be construed into an empty boast, in presence of an old man of a peaceful profession; and, as a sort of just and appropriate penance, resolved patiently to submit to the ridicule which he had incurred. He offered the cup and trencher to Maitre Pierre with a blush in his cheek, and a humiliation of countenance, which endeavoured to disguise itself under an embarrassed smile.

"You are a foolish young man," said Maitre Pierre, "and know as little of women as of princes, —whose hearts," he said, crossing himself devoutly, "God keeps in his right hand."

"And who keeps those of the women, then?" said Quentin, resolved, if he could help it, not to be borne down by the assumed superiority of this extraordinary old man, whose lofty and careless manner possessed an influence over him of which he felt ashamed.

"I am afraid you must ask of them in another quarter," said Maitre Pierre, composedly.

Quentin was again rebuffed, but not utterly disconcerted. "Surely," he said to himself, "I do not pay this same burgess of Tours all the deference which I yield him, on account of the miserable obligation of a breakfast, though it was a right good and substantial meal. Dogs and hawks are attached by feeding only—man must have kindness, if you would bind him with the cords of affection and obligation. But he is an extraordinary person; and that beautiful emanation that is even now vanishing—surely a thing so fair belongs not to this mean place, belongs not even to the money-gathering merchant himself, though he seems to exert authority over her, as doubtless he does over all whom chance brings within his little circle. It is wonderful what ideas of consequence these Flemings and Frenchmen attach to wealth—so much more than wealth deserves, that I suppose this old merchant thinks the civility I pay to his age is given to his money—I, a Scottish gentleman of blood and coat-armour, and he a mechanic of Tours!"

Such were the thoughts which hastily traversed the mind of young Durward; while Maitre Pierre said, with a smile, and at the same time patting Jacqueline's head, from which hung down her long tresses, "This young man will serve me, Jacqueline —thou mayest withdraw. I will tell thy negligent

mother she does ill to expose thee to be gazed on unnecessarily."

"It was only to wait on you," said the maiden. "I trust you will not be displeased with your kinswoman, since——"

"*Pasques-dieu!*" said the merchant, interrupting her, but not harshly, "do you bandy words with me, you brat, or stay you to gaze upon the youngster here?—Begone—he is noble, and his services will suffice me."

Jacqueline vanished; and so much was Quentin Durward interested in her sudden disappearance, that it broke his previous thread of reflection, and he complied mechanically, when Maitre Pierre said, in the tone of one accustomed to be obeyed, as he threw himself carelessly upon a large easy-chair, "Place that tray beside me."

The merchant then let his dark eyebrows sink over his keen eyes, so that the last became scarce visible, or but shot forth occasionally a quick and vivid ray, like those of the sun setting behind a dark cloud, through which its beams are occasionally darted, but singly, and for an instant.

"That is a beautiful creature," said the old man at last, raising his head, and looking steadily and firmly at Quentin, when he put the question—"a lovely girl to be the servant of an *auberge*?—she might grace the board of an honest burgess; but 'tis a vile education, a base origin."

It sometimes happens that a chance-shot will demolish a noble castle in the air, and the architect on such occasions entertains little good-will towards him who fires it, although the damage on the offender's part may be wholly unintentional. Quentin was disconcerted, and was disposed to be angry —he himself knew not why—with this old man, for acquainting him that this beautiful creature was neither more nor less than what her occupation announced—the servant of this *auberge*—an upper servant, indeed, and probably a niece of the landlord, or such like; but still a domestic, and obliged to comply with the humour of the customers, and particularly of Maitre Pierre, who probably had sufficiency of whims, and was rich enough to insure their being attended to.

The thought, the lingering thought, again returned on him, that he ought to make the old gentleman understand the difference betwixt their conditions, and call on him to mark, that, how rich soever he might be, his wealth put him on no level with a Durward of Glen-houlakin. Yet, whenever he looked on Maitre Pierre's countenance with such a purpose, there was, notwithstanding the downcast look, pinched features, and mean and miserly dress, something which prevented the young man from asserting the superiority over the merchant, which he conceived himself to possess. On the contrary, the oftener and more

fixedly Quentin looked at him, the stronger became his curiosity to know who or what this man actually was; and he set him down internally for at least a Syndic or high magistrate of Tours, or one who was, in some way or other, in the full habit of exacting and receiving deference.

Meantime, the merchant seemed again sunk into a reverie, from which he raised himself only to make the sign of the cross devoutly, and to eat some of the dried fruit, with a morsel of biscuit. He then signed to Quentin to give him the cup, adding, however, as he presented it—"You are noble."

"I surely am," replied the Scot, "if fifteen descents can make me so—So I told you before. But do not constrain yourself on that account, Maitre Pierre—I have always been taught it is the duty of the young to assist the more aged."

"An excellent maxim," said the merchant, availing himself of the youth's assistance in handing the cup, and filling it from a ewer which seemed of the same materials with the goblet, without any of those scruples in point of propriety which, perhaps, Quentin had expected to excite.

"The devil take the ease and familiarity of this old mechanical burgher," said Durward once more to himself; "he uses the attendance of a noble Scottish gentleman with as little ceremony as I would that of a gillie from Glen-isla."

The merchant, in the meanwhile, having finished his cup of water, said to his companion, "From the zeal with which you seemed to relish the *Vin de Beaulne*, I fancy you would not care much to pledge me in this elemental liquor. But I have an elixir about me which can convert even the rock water into the richest wines of France."

As he spoke, he took a large purse from his bosom, made of the fur of the sea-otter, and streamed a shower of small silver pieces into the goblet, until the cup, which was but a small one, was more than half full.

"You have reason to be more thankful, young man," said Maitre Pierre, "both to your patron Saint Quentin, and to Saint Julian, than you seemed to be but now. I would advise you to bestow alms in their name. Remain in this hostelry until you see your kinsman, Le Balafré, who will be relieved from guard in the afternoon. I will cause him to be acquainted that he may find you here, for I have business in the Castle."

Quentin Durward would have said something to have excused himself from accepting the profuse liberality of his new friend; but Maitre Pierre, bending his dark brows, and erecting his stooping figure into an attitude of more dignity than he had yet seen him assume, said, in a tone of authority, "No reply, young man, but do what you are commanded."

With these words, he left the apartment, making a sign, as he departed, that Quentin must not follow him.

The young Scotchman stood astounded, and knew not what to think of the matter. His first most natural, though perhaps not most dignified impulse, drove him to peep into the silver goblet, which assuredly was more than half full of silver pieces, to the number of several scores, of which perhaps Quentin had never called twenty his own at one time during the course of his whole life. But could he reconcile it to his dignity as a gentleman, to accept the money of this wealthy plebeian?—This was a trying question; for, though he had secured a good breakfast, it was no great reserve upon which to travel either back to Dijon, in case he chose to hazard the wrath, and enter the service, of the Duke of Burgundy, or to Saint Quentin, if he fixed on that of the Constable Saint Paul; for to one of those powers, if not to the King of France, he was determined to offer his services. He perhaps took the wisest resolution in the circumstances, in resolving to be guided by the advice of his uncle; and, in the meantime, he put the money into his velvet hawking-pouch, and called for the landlord of the house, in order to restore the silver cup—resolving, at the same time, to ask him some questions about this liberal and authoritative merchant.

The man of the house appeared presently; and, if not more communicative, was at least more loquacious, than he had formerly appeared. He positively declined to take back the silver cup. It was none of his, he said, but Maitre Pierre's, who had bestowed it on his guest. He had, indeed, four silver *hanaps* of his own, which had been left him by his grandmother, of happy memory, but no more like the beautiful carving of that in his guest's hand, than a peach was like a turnip,—that was one of the famous cups of Tours, wrought by Martin Dominique, an artist who might brag all Paris.

"And, pray, who is this Maitre Pierre," said Durward, interrupting him, "who confers such valuable gifts on strangers?"

"Who is Maitre Pierre?" said the host, dropping the words as slowly from his mouth as if he had been distilling them.

"Ay," said Durward, hastily and peremptorily, "who is this Maitre Pierre, and why does he throw about his bounties in this fashion? And who is the butcherly-looking fellow whom he sent forward to order breakfast?"

"Why, fair sir, as to who Maitre Pierre is, you should have asked the question at himself; and for the gentleman who ordered breakfast to be made ready, may God keep us from his closer acquaintance!"

"There is something mysterious in all this," said the young Scot. "This Maitre Pierre tells me he is a merchant."

"And if he told you so," said the innkeeper, "surely he is a merchant."

"What commodities does he deal in?"

"O, many a fair matter of traffic," said the host; "and specially he has set up silk manufactories here, which match those rich bales that the Venetians bring from India and Cathay. You might see the rows of mulberry trees as you came hither, all planted by Maitre Pierre's commands, to feed the silk-worms."

"And that young person who brought in the confections, who is she, my good friend?" said the guest.

"My lodger, sir, with her guardian, some sort of aunt or kinswoman, as I think," replied the innkeeper.

"And do you usually employ your guests in waiting on each other?" said Durward; "for I observed that Maitre Pierre would take nothing from your hand, or that of your attendant."

"Rich men may have their fancies, for they can pay for them," said the landlord; "this is not the first time that Maitre Pierre has found the true way to make gentlefolks serve at his beck."

The young Scotchman felt somewhat offended at the insinuation; but, disguising his resentment,

he asked whether he could be accommodated with an apartment at this place for a day, and perhaps longer.

"Certainly," the innkeeper replied; "for whatever time he was pleased to command it."

"Could he be permitted," he asked, "to pay his respects to the ladies, whose fellow-lodger he was about to become?"

The innkeeper was uncertain. "They went not abroad," he said, "and received no one at home."

"With the exception, I presume, of Maitre Pierre?" said Durward.

"I am not at liberty to name any exceptions," answered the man, firmly, but respectfully.

Quentin, who carried the notions of his own importance pretty high, considering how destitute he was of means to support them, being somewhat mortified by the innkeeper's reply, did not hesitate to avail himself of a practice common enough in that age. "Carry to the ladies," he said, "a flask of *vernâl*, with my humble duty; and say, that Quentin Durward, of the house of Glen-houlakin, a Scottish cavalier of honour, and now their fellow-lodger, desires the permission to dedicate his homage to them in a personal interview."

The messenger departed, and returned, almost instantly, with the thanks of the ladies, who declined the proffered refreshment, and, returning their thanks to the Scottish cavalier, regretted

that, residing there in privacy, they could not receive his visit.

Quentin bit his lip, took a cup of the rejected *vernât*, which the host had placed on the table. "By the mass, but this is a strange country," said he to himself, "where merchants and mechanics exercise the manners and munificence of nobles, and little travelling damsels, who hold their court in a *cabaret*, keep their state like disguised princesses! I will see that black-browed maiden again, or it will go hard, however;" and having formed this prudent resolution, he demanded to be conducted to the apartment which he was to call his own.

The landlord presently ushered him up a turret staircase, and from thence along a gallery, with many doors opening from it, like those of cells in a convent; a resemblance which our young hero, who recollected, with much ennui, an early specimen of a monastic life, was far from admiring. The host paused at the very end of the gallery, selected a key from the large bunch which he carried at his girdle, opened the door, and shewed his guest the interior of a turret-chamber, small, indeed, but which, being clean and solitary, and having the pallet bed, and the few articles of furniture, in unusually good order, seemed, on the whole, a little palace.

"I hope you will find your dwelling agreeable

here, fair sir," said the landlord.—" I am bound to pleasure every friend of Maitre Pierre."

" O happy ducking !" exclaimed Quentin Durward, cutting a caper on the floor, so soon as his host had retired: " Never came good luck in a better or a wetter form. I have been fairly deluged by my good fortune."

As he spoke thus, he stepped towards the little window, which, as the turret projected considerably from the principal line of the building, not only commanded a very pretty garden, of some extent, belonging to the inn, but overlooked, beyond its boundary, a pleasant grove of those very mulberry trees which Maitre Pierre was said to have planted for the support of the silk-worm. Besides, turning the eye from these more remote objects, and looking straight along the wall, the turret of Quentin was opposite to another turret, and the little window at which he stood commanded a similar little window, in a corresponding projection of the building. Now it would be difficult for a man twenty years older than Quentin, to say why this locality interested him more than either the pleasant garden or the grove of mulberry trees; for, alas! eyes which have been used for forty years and upwards, look with indifference on little turret-windows, though the lattice be half-open to admit the air, while the shutter is half-closed to exclude the sun, or perhaps a too curious eye—nay,

even though there hang on the one side of the casement a lute, partly mantled by a light veil of sea-green silk. But, at Durward's happy age, such *accidents*, as a painter would call them, form sufficient foundation for a hundred airy visions and mysterious conjectures, at recollection of which the full-grown man smiles while he sighs, and sighs while he smiles.

As it may be supposed that our friend Quentin wished to learn a little more of his fair neighbour, the owner of the lute and veil,—as it may be supposed he was at least interested to know whether she might not prove the same whom he had seen in humble attendance on Maitre Pierre, it must of course be understood, that he did not produce a broad, flat, staring visage and person in full front of his own casement. Durward knew better the art of bird-catching; and it was to his keeping his person skilfully withdrawn on one side of his window, while he peeped through the lattice, that he owed the pleasure of seeing a white, round, beautiful arm, take down the instrument, and that his ears had presently after their share in the reward of his dexterous management.

The maid of the little turret, of the veil and of the lute, sung exactly such a little air as we are accustomed to suppose flowed from the lips of the high-born dames of chivalry, when knights and troubadours listened and languished. The words

had neither so much sense, wit, or fancy, as to withdraw the attention from the music, nor the music so much of art, as to drown all feeling of the words. The one seemed fitted to the other; and if the song had been recited without the notes, or the air played without the words, neither would have been worth noting. It is, therefore, scarce fair to put upon record lines intended not to be said or read, but only to be sung. But such scraps of old poetry have always had a sort of fascination for us; and as the tune is lost for ever—unless Bishop happens to find the notes, or some lark teaches Stephens to warble the air—we will risk our credit, and the taste of the Lady of the Lute, by preserving the verses, simple and even rude as they are.

"Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark his lay who thrill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, they know the hour,
But where is County Guy?

"The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.

The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy?

Whatever the reader may think of this simple ditty, it had a powerful effect on Quentin, when married to heavenly airs, and sung by a sweet and melting voice, the notes mingling with the gentle breezes which wafted perfumes from the garden, and the figure of the songstress being so partially and obscurely visible, as threw a veil of mysterious fascination over the whole.

At the close of the air, the listener could not help shewing himself more boldly than he had yet done, in a rash attempt to see more than he had yet been able to discover. The music instantly ceased—the casement was closed, and a dark curtain, dropped on the inside, put a stop to all farther observation on the part of the neighbour in the next turret.

Durward was mortified and surprised at the consequence of his precipitance, but comforted himself with the hope, that the Lady of the Lute could neither easily forego the practice of an instrument which seemed so familiar to her, nor cruelly resolve to renounce the pleasures of fresh air and an open window, for the churlish purpose of preserving for her own exclusive ear the sweet sounds which she created. There came, perhaps, a little feeling of

personal vanity to mingle with these consolatory reflections. If, as he shrewdly suspected, there was a beautiful dark-tressed damsel inhabitant of the one turret, he could not but be conscious that a handsome, young, roving, bright-locked gallant, a cavalier of fortune, was the tenant of the other; and romances, those prudent instructors, had taught his youth, that if damsels were shy, they were yet neither void of interest nor of curiosity in their neighbours' affairs.

Whilst Quentin was engaged in these sage reflections, a sort of attendant or chamberlain of the inn informed him that a cavalier desired to speak with him below.

CHAP. V.

THE MAN-AT-ARMS.

—— Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Seeking the bubble reputation even in the canon's mouth.
As You Like It.

THE cavalier who awaited Quentin Durward's descent into the apartment where he had breakfasted, was one of those of whom Louis XI. had long since said, that they held in their hands the fortune of France, as to them were intrusted the direct custody and protection of the royal person.

Charles the Sixth had instituted this celebrated body, the Archers, as they were called, of the Scottish Body-guard, with better reason than can generally be alleged for establishing round the throne a guard of foreign and mercenary troops. The divisions which tore from his side more than half of France, together with the wavering and uncertain faith of the nobility who yet acknowledged his cause, rendered it impolitic and unsafe to commit his personal safety to their keeping. The Scottish nation was the hereditary enemy of the English, and the an-

cient, and, as it seemed, the natural allies of France. They were poor, courageous, faithful—their ranks were sure to be supplied from the superabundant population of their own country, than which none in Europe sent forth more or bolder adventurers. Their high claims of descent, too, gave them a good title to approach the person of a monarch more closely than other troops, while the smallness of their numbers prevented the possibility of their mutinying, and becoming masters where they ought to be servants.

On the other hand, the French monarchs made it their policy to conciliate the affections of this selected band of foreigners, by allowing them honorary privileges and ample pay, which last most of them disposed of with military profusion in supporting their supposed rank. Each of them ranked as a gentleman in place and honour; and their near approach to the King's person gave them dignity in their own eyes, as well as in those of the nation of France. They were sumptuously armed, equipped, and mounted; and each was entitled to allowance for a squire, a valet, a page, and two yeomen, one of whom was termed *coutelier*, from the large knife which he wore to dispatch those whom in the *melée* his master had thrown to the ground. With these followers, and a corresponding equipage, an Archer of the Scottish Guard was a person of quality and importance; and vacancies be-

ing generally filled up by those who had been trained in the service as pages or valets, the cadets of the best Scottish families were often sent to serve under some friend and relation in those capacities, until a chance of preferment should occur.

The coutelier and his companion, not being noble or capable of this promotion, were recruited from persons of inferior quality; but as their pay and appointments were excellent, their masters were easily able to select from among their wandering countrymen the strongest and most courageous to wait upon them in that capacity.

Ludovic Lesly, or, as we shall more frequently call him, Le Balafré, by which name he was generally known in France, was upwards of six feet high, robust, strongly compacted in person, and hard-favoured in countenance, which latter attribute was much increased by a large and ghastly scar, which, beginning on his forehead, and narrowly missing his right eye, had laid bare the cheek-bone, and descended from thence almost to the tip of his ear, exhibiting a deep seam, which was sometimes scarlet, sometimes purple, sometimes blue, and sometimes approaching to black; but always hideous, because at variance with the complexion of the face in whatever state it chanced to be, whether agitated or still, flushed with unusual passion, or in its ordinary state of weather-beaten and sun-burnt swarthiness.

His dress and arms were splendid. He wore his national bonnet, crested with a tuft of feathers, and with a Virgin Mary of massive silver for a brooch. These had been presented to the Scottish Guard, in consequence of the King, in one of his fits of superstitious piety, having devoted the swords of his guard to the service of the Holy Virgin, and, as some say, carried the matter so far as to draw out a commission to Our Lady as their Captain General. The Archer's gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets, were of the finest steel, curiously inlaid with silver, and his hauberk, or shirt of mail, was as clear and bright as the frost-work of a winter morning upon fern or briar. He wore a loose surcoat, or cassock, of rich blue velvet, open at the sides like that of a herald, with a large white cross of embroidered silver bisecting it both before and behind —his knees and legs were protected by hose of mail and shoes of steel—a broad strong poniard (called the *Mercy of God*) hung by his right side—the baldric for his two-handed sword, richly embroidered, hung upon his left shoulder; but, for convenience, he at present carried in his hand that unwieldy weapon, which the rules of his service forbade him to lay aside.

Quentin Durward, though, like the Scottish youth of the period, he had been early taught to look upon arms and war, thought he had never seen a more martial-looking, or more completely equip-

ped and accomplished man-at-arms, than now saluted him in the person of his mother's brother, called Ludovic with the Scar, or Le Balafré; yet he could not but shrink a little from the grim expression of his countenance, while, with its rough moustachios, he brushed first the one and then the other cheek of his kinsman, welcomed his fair nephew to France, and, in the same breath, asked what news from Scotland.

"Little good, dear uncle," replied young Durward; "but I am glad that you know me so readily."

"I would have known thee, boy, in the *landes* of Bourdeaux, had I met thee marching there like a crane on a pair of stilts. But sit thee down—sit thee down—if there is sorrow to hear of, we will have wine to make us bear it.—Ho! old Pinch-Measure, our good host, bring us of thy best, and that in an instant."

The well-known sound of the Scottish-French was as familiar in the taverns near Plessis, as that of the Swiss-French in the modern *ginguettes* of Paris; and promptly—ay, with the promptitude of fear and precipitation, was it heard and obeyed. A flagon of champagne stood before them, of which the elder took a draught, while the nephew helped himself only to a moderate sip, to acknowledge his uncle's courtesy, saying, in excuse, that he had already drunk wine that morning.

"That had been a rare apology in the mouth of thy sister, fair nephew," said Le Balafré; "you must fear the wine-pot less, if you would wear beard on your face, and write yourself soldier. But, come—come—unbuckle your Scottish mail-bag—give us the news of Glen-houlakin—How doth my sister?"

"Dead, fair uncle," answered Quentin, sorrowfully.

"Dead!" echoed his uncle, with a tone rather marked by wonder than sympathy—"why, she was five years younger than I, and I was never better in my life. Dead! the thing is impossible. I have never had so much as a headach, unless after revelling out my two or three days' furlough with the brethren of the joyous science—and my poor sister is dead!—And your father, fair nephew, hath he married again?"

And, ere the youth could reply, he read the answer in his surprise at the question, and said, "What! no?—I would have sworn that Allan Durward was no man to live without a wife. He loved to have his house in order—loved to look on a pretty woman too; and was somewhat strict in life withal—matrimony did all this for him. Now, I care little about these comforts; and I can look on a pretty woman without thinking on the sacrament of wedlock—I am scarce holy enough for that."

"Alas! dear uncle, my mother was left a widow a year since, when Glen-houlakin was harried by the Ogilvies. My father, and my two uncles, and my two elder brothers, and seven of my kinsmen, and the harper, and the tasker, and some six more of our people, were killed in defending the castle; and there is not a burning hearth or a standing stone in all Glen-houlakin."

"Cross of Saint Andrew!" said Le Balafré; "that is what I call an onslaught. Ay, these Ogilvies were ever but sorry neighbours to Glen-houlakin—an evil chance it was; but fate of war—fate of war.—When did this mishap befal, fair nephew?" With that he took a deep draught of wine in lieu, and shook his head with much solemnity, when his kinsman replied, that his family had been destroyed upon the festival of Saint Jude last by-past.

"Look ye there," said the soldier; "I said it was all chance—on that very day I and twenty of my comrades carried the Castle of Roche-noir by storm, from Amaury Bras-de-fer, a captain of free lances, whom you must have heard of. I killed him on his own threshold, and gained as much gold as made this fair chain, which was once twice as long as it now is—and that minds me to send part of it on an holy errand.—Here, Andrew—Andrew!"

Andrew, his yeoman, entered, dressed like the

Archer himself in the general equipment, but without the armour for the limbs,—that of the body more coarsely manufactured—his cap without a plume, and his cassock made of serge, or coarse cloth, instead of rich velvet. Untwining his gold chain from his neck, Balafré twisted off, with his firm and strong-set teeth, about four inches from the one end of it, and said to his attendant, "Here, Andrew, carry this to my gossip, jolly Father Boniface, the monk of Saint Martin's—greet him well from me, by the same token that he could not say God save ye when we last parted at midnight—Tell my gossip that my brother and sister, and some others of my house, are all dead and gone, and I pray him to say masses for their souls as far as the value of these links will carry him, and to do on trust what else may be necessary to free them from Purgatory. And hark ye, as they were just-living people, and free from all heresy, it may be that they are well nigh out of limbo already, so that a little matter may have them free of the fetlocks; and in that case, look ye, ye will say I desire to take out the gold in curses upon a generation called the Ogilvies, in what way soever the church may best come at them. You understand all this, Andrew?"

The coutelier nodded.

"Then look that none of the links find their way to the wine-house ere the Monk touches them; for if it so chance, thou shalt taste of saddle-girth

and stirrup-leather, till thou art as raw as Saint Bartholomew.—Yet hold, I see thy eye has fixed on the wine measure, and thou shalt not go without tasting."

So saying, he filled him a brimful cup, which the coutelier drank off, and retired to do his patron's commission.

"And now, fair nephew, let us hear what was your own fortune in this unhappy matter."

"I fought it out among those who were older and stouter than I was, till we were all brought down," said Durward, "and I received a cruel wound."

"Not a worse slash than I received ten years since myself," said Le Balafré.—"Look at this now, my fair nephew," tracing the dark crimson gash which was imprinted on his face—"An Ogilvy's sword never ploughed so deep a furrow."

"They ploughed deeply enough," answered Quentin, sadly; "but they were tired at last, and my mother's entreaties procured mercy for me, when I was found to retain some spark of life; but although a learned monk of Aberbrothock, who chanced to be our guest at the fatal time, and narrowly escaped being killed in the fray, was permitted to bind my wounds, and finally to remove me to a place of safety, it was only on promise, given both by my mother and him, that I should become a monk."

"A monk!" exclaimed the uncle—"Holy Saint Andrew! that is what never befel me. No one, from my childhood upwards, ever so much as dreamed of making me a monk—And yet I wonder when I think of it; for you will allow that, bating the reading and writing, which I could never learn, and the psalmody, which I could never endure, and the dress, which is that of a mad beggar—Our Lady forgive me!—(here he crossed himself)—and their fasts, which do not suit my appetite, I would have made every whit as good a monk as my little gossip at Saint Martin's yonder. But I know not why, none ever proposed the station to me.—O so, fair nephew, you were to be a monk then—and wherefore, I pray you?"

"That my father's house might be ended, either in the cloister or in the tomb," answered Quentin, with deep feeling.

"I see," answered his uncle—"I comprehend. Cunning rogues—very cunning!—They might have been cheated though; for, look ye, fair nephew, I myself remember the canon Robersart who had taken the vows, and afterwards broke out of cloister, and became a captain of Free Companions. He had a mistress, the prettiest wench I ever saw, and three as beautiful children—There is no trusting monks, fair nephew,—no trusting them—they may become soldiers and fathers when you least expect it—but on with your tale."

"I have little more to tell," said Durward, "except that, considering my poor mother in some degree a pledge for me, I took the dress of a novice, and conformed to the cloister rules, and even learned to read and write."

"To read and write!" exclaimed Le Balafré, who was one of that sort of people who think all knowledge is miraculous which chances to exceed their own—"To write, sayest thou, and to read! I cannot believe it—never Durward could write his name that ever I heard of, nor Lesly either. I can answer for one of them—I can no more write than I can fly. Now, in Saint Louis's name, how did they teach it you?"

"It was troublesome at first," said Durward, "but became more easy by use; and I was weak with my wounds and loss of blood, and desirous to gratify my preserver, Father Peter, and so I was the more easily kept to my task. But after several months' languishing, my good kind mother died, and as my health was now fully restored, I communicated to my benefactor, who was also Sub-Prior of the Convent, my reluctance to take the vows; and it was agreed between us, since my vocation lay not to the cloister, that I should be sent out into the world to seek my fortune, and that, to save the Sub-Prior from the anger of the Ogilvies, my departure should have the appearance of flight; and to colour it, I brought off the Abbot's hawk with

me. But I was regularly dismissed, as will appear from the hand and seal of the Abbot himself."

"That is right—that is well," said his uncle. "Our King cares little what theft thou may'st have made, but hath a horror at anything like a breach of the cloister. And, I warrant thee, thou hadst no great treasure to bear thy charges?"

"Only a few pieces of silver," said the youth; "for to you, fair uncle, I must make a free confession."

"Alas!" replied Le Balafré, "that is hard. Now, though I am never a hoarder of my pay, because it doth ill to bear a charge about one in these perilous times, yet I always have (and I would advise you to follow my example) some odd gold chain, or bracelet, or carcanet, that serves for the ornament of my person, and can at need spare a superfluous link or two for any immediate purpose.—But you may ask, fair kinsman, how you are to come by such toys as this?—(he shook his chain with complacent triumph)—They hang not on every bush—they grow not in the fields like the daffodils, with whose stalks children make knights' collars. What then?—you may get such where I got this, in the service of the good King of France, where there is always wealth to be found, if a man has but the heart to seek it, at the risk of a little life or so."

"I understood," said Quentin, evading a decision to which he felt himself as yet scarce compe-

tently informed, " that the Duke of Burgundy keeps a more noble state than the King of France, and that there is more honour to be won under his banners—that good blows are struck there, and deeds of arms done; while the Most Christian King, they say, gains his victories by his ambassadors' tongues."

" You speak like a foolish boy, fair nephew," answered he with the Scar; " and yet, I bethink me, when I came hither I was nearly as simple: I could never think of a King but what I supposed him sitting under the high deas, and feasting amid his high vassals and Paladins, eating *blanc-manger*, with a great gold crown upon his head, or else charging at the head of his troops like Charlemagne in the romaunts, or like Robert Bruce or William Wallace in our own true histories. Hark in thine ear, man—it is all moonshine in the water. Policy —policy does it all. It is an art our King has found out, to fight with other men's swords, and to wage his soldiers out of other men's purses. Ah! it is the wisest Prince that ever put purple on his back—and yet he weareth not much of that neither —I see him often go plainer than I would think befitted me to do."

" But you meet not my exception, fair uncle," answered young Durward; " I would serve, since serve I must in a foreign land, somewhere where a brave deed, were it my hap to do one, might work me a name."

"I understand you, my fair nephew," said the royal man-at-arms, "I understand you passing well; but you are unripe in these matters. The Duke of Burgundy is a hot-headed, impetuous, pudding-headed, iron-ribbed dare-all. He charges at the head of his nobles and native knights, his liegemen of Artois and Hainault; think you, if you were there, or if I were there myself, that we could be much farther forward than the Duke and all his brave nobles of his own land? if we were not up with them, we had a chance to be turned on the Provost-Marshal's hands for being slow in making to; if we were abreast of them, all would be called well, and we might be thonght to have deserved our pay; and grant that I was a spear's-length or so in the front, which is both difficult and dangerous in such a *melée* where all do their best, why, my lord duke says, in his Flemish, when he sees a good blow struck, 'Ha! *gut getroffen!* a good lance—a brave Scot—give him a florin to drink our health;' but neither rank, nor lands, nor treasures, come to the stranger in such a service—all goes to the children of the soil."

"And where should it go, in heaven's name, fair uncle?" demanded young Durward.

"To him that protects the children of the soil," said Balafré, drawing up his gigantic height. "Thus says King Louis:—'My good French peasant—mine honest Jacques Bonhomme—get you to your

tools, your plough and your harrow, your pruning-knife and your hoe—here is my gallant Scot that will fight for you, and you shall only have the trouble to pay him—And you, my most serene duke, my illustrious count, and my most mighty marquis, e'en rein up your fiery courage till it is wanted, for it is apt to start out of the course, and to hurt its master; here are my companies of ordonance—here are my French Guards—here are, above all, my Scottish Archers, and mine honest Ludovic with the Scar, who will fight, as well or better than you, with all that undisciplined valour, which, in your fathers' time, lost Cressy and Azincour.' Now, see you not in which of these states a cavalier of fortune holds the highest rank, and must come to the highest honour?"

"I think I understand you, fair uncle," answered the nephew; "but, in my mind, honour cannot be won where there is no risk. Sure, this is—I pray you pardon me—an easy and almost slothful life, to mount guard round an elderly man whom no one thinks of harming, to spend summer-day and winter-night up in yonder battlements, and shut up all the while in iron cages, for fear you should desert your posts—uncle, uncle, it is but the hawk upon his perch, who is never carried out to the fields!"

"Now, by Saint Martin of Tours, the boy has some spirit! a right touch of the Lesly in him;

much like myself, though always with a little more folly in it. Hark ye, youth—Long live the King of France!—scarce a day but there is some commission in hand, by which some of his followers may win both coin and credit. Think not that the bravest and most dangerous deeds are done by daylight. I could tell you of some, as scaling castles, making prisoners, and the like, where one who shall be nameless hath run higher risk, and gained greater favour, than any desperado in the train of desperate Charles of Burgundy. And if it please his Majesty to remain behind, and in the back-ground, while such things are doing, he hath the more leisure of spirit to admire, and the more liberality of hand to reward the adventurers, whose dangers, perhaps, and whose feats of arms, he can better judge of than if he had personally shared them. O, 'tis a sagacious and most politic monarch!"

His nephew paused, and then said, in a low but impressive tone of voice, "The good Father Peter used often to teach me there might be much danger in deeds by which little glory was acquired. I need not say to you, fair uncle, that I do in course suppose that these secret commissions must needs be honourable."

"For whom or for what take you me, fair nephew?" said Balafré, somewhat sternly; "I have not been trained, indeed, in the cloister, neither can I write or read. But I am your mother's brother;

I am a loyal Lesly. Think you that I am like to recommend to you anything unworthy? The best knight in France, Du Guesclin himself, if he were alive again, might be proud to number my deeds among his achievements."

"I cannot doubt your warranty, fair uncle," said the youth; "you are the only adviser my mishap has left me. But is it true, as fame says, that this King keeps a meagre Court here at his Castle of Plessis? No repair of nobles or courtiers, none of his grand feudatories in attendance, none of the high officers of the crown; half solitary sports, shared only with the menials of his household; secret councils, to which only low and obscure men are invited; rank and nobility depressed, and men raised from the lowest origin to the kingly favour—all this seems unregulated, resembles not the manners of his father, the noble Charles, who tore from the fangs of the English lion this more than half conquered kingdom of France."

"You speak like a giddy child," said Le Balafré; "and even as a child, you harp over the same notes on a new string. Look you: if the King employs Oliver Dain, his barber, to do what Oliver can do better than any peer of them all, is not the kingdom the gainer? If he bids his stout Provost-Marshal Tristan, arrest such or such a seditious burgher, take off such or such a turbulent noble, the deed is done and no more of it; when, were the

commission given to a duke or peer of France, he might perchance send the King back a defiance in exchange. If, again, the King pleases to give to plain Ludovic le Balafré a commission which he will execute, instead of employing the High Constable, who would perhaps betray it, doth it not shew wisdom? Above all, doth not a monarch of such conditions best suit cavaliers of fortune, who must go where their services are most highly prized, and most frequently in demand?—No, no, child, I tell thee Louis knows how to choose his confidants, and what to charge them with; suiting, as they say, the burthen to each man's back. He is not like the King of Castile, who choked of thirst, because the great butler was not beside to hand his cup.—But hark to the bell of Saint Martin's! I must hasten back to the Castle.—Farewell—make much of yourself, and at eight to-morrow morning present yourself before the drawbridge, and ask for me at the sentinel. Take heed you step not off the straight and beaten path in approaching the portal! it may cost you a limb, which you will sorely miss. You shall see the King, and learn to judge him for yourself—farewell."

So saying, Balafré hastily departed, forgetting, in his hurry, to pay for the wine he had called for, a shortness of memory incidental to persons of his description, and which his host, overawed, perhaps, by the nodding bonnet and ponderous two-handed

sword, did not presume to use any efforts for correcting.

It might have been expected that, when left alone, Durward would have again betaken himself to his turret, in order to watch for the repetition of those delicious sounds which had soothed his morning reverie. But that was a chapter of romance, and his uncle's conversation had opened to him a page of the real history of life. It was no pleasing one, and for the present the recollections and reflections which it excited, were qualified to overpower other thoughts, and especially all of a light and soothing nature.

Quentin resorted to a solitary walk along the banks of the rapid Cher, having previously inquired of his landlord for one which he might traverse without fear of disagreeable interruption from snares and pitfalls, and there endeavoured to compose his turmoiled and scattered thoughts, and consider his future motions, upon which his meeting with his uncle had thrown some dubiety.

CHAP. VI.

THE BOHEMIANS.

Sae rantingly, sae wantingly,
Sae dantonly gaed he,
He play'd a spring and danced a round
Beneath the gallows tree.

Old Song.

THE manner in which Quentin Durward had been educated, was not of a kind to soften the heart, or perhaps to improve the moral feeling. He, with the rest of his family, had been trained to the chase as an amusement, and taught to consider war as their only serious occupation, and that it was the great duty of their lives stubbornly to endure, and fiercely to retaliate, the attacks of their feudal enemies, by whom their race had been at last almost annihilated. And yet there mixed with these feuds a spirit of rude chivalry, and even courtesy, which softened their rigour; so that revenge, their only justice, was still prosecuted with some regard to humanity and generosity. The lessons of the worthy old monk, better attended to, perhaps, during a

long illness and adversity, than they might have been in health and success, had given young Durward still farther insight into the duties of humanity towards others; and, considering the ignorance of the period, the general prejudices entertained in favour of a military life, and the manner in which he himself had been bred, the youth was disposed to feel more accurately the moral duties incumbent on his station than was usual at the time.

He reflected on his interview with his uncle with a sense of embarrassment and disappointment. His hopes had been high; for although intercourse by letters was out of the question, yet a pilgrim, or an adventurous trafficker, or a crippled soldier, sometimes brought Lesly's name to Glen-houlakin, and all united in praising his undaunted courage, and his success in many petty enterprizes which his master had intrusted to him. Quentin's imagination had filled up the sketch in his own way, and assimilated his successful and adventurous uncle (whose exploits probably lost nothing in the telling) to some of the champions and knight-errants of whom minstrels sang, and who won crowns and kings' daughters by dint of sword and lance. He was now compelled to rank his kinsman much lower in the scale of chivalry; though, blinded by the high respect paid to parents, and those who approach that character—moved by every early prejudice in his favour—inexperienced besides, and passionately

attached to his mother's memory, he saw not, in the only brother of that dear relation, the character which he truly held, which was that of an ordinary mercenary soldier, neither much worse nor greatly better than the numbers of the same profession whose presence added to the distracted state of France.

Without being wantonly cruel, Balafré was, from habit, indifferent to human life and human suffering; he was profoundly ignorant, greedy of booty, unscrupulous how he acquired it, and profuse in expending it on the gratification of his own passions. The habit of attending exclusively to his own wants and interests, had converted him into one of the most selfish animals in the world; so that he was seldom able, as the reader may have remarked, to proceed far in any subject without considering how it applied to himself, or, as it is called, making the case his own, though not upon feelings connected with the golden rule, but such as were very different. To this must be added, that the narrow round of his duties and his pleasures had gradually circumscribed his thoughts, hopes, and wishes, and quenched in a great measure the wild spirit of honour, and desire of distinction in arms, by which he had been once animated. Balafré was, in short, a keen soldier, hardened, selfish, and narrow-minded; active and bold in the discharge of his duty, but acknowledging few objects beyond it, excepting the

formal observance of a careless devotion, relieved by an occasional debauch with brother Boniface, his comrade and confessor. Had his genius been of a more extended character, he would probably have been promoted to some important command, for the King, who knew every soldier of his body-guard personally, reposed much confidence in Balafré's courage and fidelity; and, besides, the Scot had either wisdom or cunning enough perfectly to understand, and ably to humour, the peculiarities of that sovereign. Still, however, his capacity was too much limited to admit of his rising to higher rank, and though smiled on and favoured by Louis on many occasions, Balafré continued a mere Life-guards-man.

Without seeing the full scope of his uncle's character, Quentin felt shocked at his indifference to the disastrous extirpation of his brother-in-law's whole family, and could not help being surprised, moreover, that so near a relative had not offered him the assistance of his purse, which, but for the generosity of Maitre Pierre, he would have been under the necessity of directly craving from him. He wronged his uncle, however, in supposing that this want of attention to his probable necessities was owing to actual avarice. Not precisely needing money himself at that moment, it had not occurred to Balafré that his nephew might be in exigencies; otherwise, he held a near kinsman so much

a part of himself, that he would have provided for the weal of the living nephew, as he endeavoured to do for that of his deceased sister and her husband. But whatever was the motive, the neglect was very unsatisfactory to young Durward, and he wished more than once he had taken service with the Duke of Burgundy before he quarrelled with his forester. "Whatever had then become of me," he thought to himself, "I would always have been able to keep up my spirits with the reflection, that I had, in case of the worst, a stout back-friend in this uncle of mine. But now I have seen him, and, woe worth him, there has been more help in a mere mechanical stranger, than I have found in my own mother's brother, my countryman and a cavalier. One would think the slash, that has carved all comeliness out of his face, had let at the same time every drop of gentle blood out of his body."

Durward now regretted he had not had an opportunity to mention Maitre Pierre to Balafré, in hopes of obtaining some farther account of that personage; but his uncle's questions had been huddled fast on each other, and the summons of the great bell of Saint Martin of Tours had broken off their conference rather suddenly. That old man, he recollected, was crabbed and dogged in appearance, sharp and scornful in language, but generous and liberal in his actions; and such a stranger is worth a cold kinsman—"What says our old Scottish pro-

verb?—'Better kind fremit, than fremit kindred.' I will find out that man, which, methinks, should be no difficult task, since he is so wealthy as mine host bespeaks him. He will give me good advice for my governance, at least; and if he goes to strange countries, as many such do, I know not but his may be as adventurous a service as that of those Guards of Louis."

As Quentin framed this thought, a whisper from those recesses of the heart in which lies much that the owner does not know of, or will not acknowledge willingly, suggested that, perchance, the lady of the turret, she of the veil and lute, might share that adventurous journey.

As the Scottish youth made these reflections, he met two grave-looking men, apparently citizens of Tours, whom, doffing his cap with the reverence due from youth to age, he respectfully asked to direct him to the house of Maitre Pierre.

"The house of whom, my fair son?" said one of the passengers.

"Of Maitre Pierre, the great silk merchant, who planted all the mulberry trees in the park yonder," said Durward.

"Young man," said one of them who was nearest to him, "you have taken up an idle trade a little too early."

"And have chosen wrong subjects to practise your fooleries upon," said the farther one, still more

gruffly. "The Syndic of Tours is not accustomed to be thus talked to by strolling jesters from foreign parts."

Quentin was so much surprised at the causeless offence which these two decent-looking persons had taken at a very simple and civil question, that he forgot to be angry at the rudeness of their reply, and stood staring after them as they walked on with amended pace, often looking back at him, as if they were desirous to get as soon as possible out of his reach.

He next met a party of vine-dressers, and addressed to them the same question; and, in reply, they demanded to know whether he wanted Maitre Pierre, the schoolmaster? or Maitre Pierre, the carpenter? or Maitre Pierre, the beadle? or half-a-dozen of Maitre Pierres besides. When none of these corresponded with the description of the person after whom he inquired, the peasants accused him of jesting with them impertinently, and threatened to fall upon him and beat him, in guerdon of his raillery. The oldest amongst them, who had some influence over the rest, prevailed on them to desist from violence.

"You see by his speech and his fool's cap," said he, "that he is one of the foreign mountebanks who are come into the country, and whom some call magicians and soothsayers, and some jugglers, and the like, and there is no knowing what tricks they have

amongst them. I have heard of such a one paying a liard to eat his belly-full of grapes in a poor man's vineyard; and he ate as many as would have loaded a wain, and never undid a button of his jerkin —and so let him pass quietly, and keep his way, as we will keep ours.—And you, friend, if you would shun worse, walk quietly on, in the name of God, our Lady of Marmoutier, and Saint Martin of Tours, and trouble us no more about your Maitre Pierre, which may be another name for the devil, for aught we know."

The Scot, finding himself much the weaker party, judged it his wisest course to walk on without reply; but the peasants, who at first shrunk from him in horror, at his supposed talents for sorcery and grape-devouring, took heart of grace as he got to a distance, and having uttered a few cries and curses, finally gave them emphasis with a shower of stones, although at such a distance as to do little or no harm to the object of their displeasure. Quentin, as he pursued his walk, began to think, in his turn, either that he himself lay under a spell, or that the people of Touraine were the most stupid, brutal, and inhospitable of the French peasants. The next incident which came under his observation did not tend to diminish this opinion.

On a slight eminence, rising above the rapid and beautiful Cher, in the direct line of his path, two or three large chesnut trees were so happily placed

as to form a distinguished and remarkable group; and beside them stood three or four peasants, motionless, with their eyes turned upwards, and fixed, apparently, upon some object amongst the branches of the tree next to them. The meditations of youth are seldom so profound as not to yield to the slightest impulse of curiosity, as easily as the lightest pebble, dropped casually from the hand, breaks the surface of a limpid pool. Quentin hastened his pace, and ran lightly up the rising ground, time enough to witness the ghastly spectacle which attracted the notice of these gazers—which was nothing less than the body of a man, convulsed by the last agony, suspended on one of the branches.

"Why do you not cut him down?" said the young Scot, whose hand was as ready to assist affliction, as to maintain his own honour when he deemed it assailed.

One of the peasants, turning on him an eye from which fear had banished all expression but its own, and a face as pale as clay, pointed to a mark cut upon the bark of the tree, bearing the same rude resemblance to a *fleur-de-lys* which certain talismanic scratches, well known to our revenue officers, bear to a *broad arrow*. Neither understanding nor heeding the import of this symbol, young Durward sprung lightly as the ounce up into the tree, drew from his pouch that most necessary implement of a Highlander or woodsman, the trusty

skene dhu, and, calling to those below to receive the body on their hands, cut the rope asunder in less than a minute after he had perceived the exigency.

But his humanity was ill seconded by the bystanders. So far from rendering Durward any assistance, they seemed terrified at the audacity of his action, and took to flight with one consent, as if they feared their merely looking on might have been construed into accession to his daring deed. The body, unsupported from beneath, fell heavily to earth, in such a manner, that Quentin, who presently afterwards jumped down, had the mortification to see that the last sparks of life were extinguished. He gave not up his charitable purpose, however, without farther efforts. He freed the wretched man's neck from the fatal noose, undid the doublet, threw water on the face, and practised the other ordinary remedies resorted to for recalling suspended animation.

While he was thus humanely engaged, a wild clamour of tongues, speaking a language which he knew not, arose around him; and he had scarcely time to observe that he was surrounded by several men and women of a singular and foreign appearance, when he found himself roughly seized by both arms, while a naked knife, at the same moment, was offered to his throat.

"Pale slave of Eblis!" said a man, in imperfect

French, "are you robbing him you have murdered?—But we have you—and you shall abuy it."

There were knives drawn on every side of him as these words were spoken, and the grim and distorted countenances which glared on him, were like those of wolves rushing on their prey.

Still the young Scot's courage and presence of mind bore him out. "What mean ye, my masters?" he said; "if that be your friend's body, I have just now cut him down, in pure charity, and you will do better to try to recover his life, than to misuse an innocent stranger to whom he owes his chance of escape."

The women had by this time taken possession of the dead body, and continued the attempts to recover animation which Durward had been making use of, though with the like bad success; so that, desisting from their fruitless efforts, they seemed to abandon themselves to all the oriental expressions of grief; the women making a piteous wailing, and tearing their long black hair, while the men seemed to rend their garments, and to sprinkle dust upon their heads. They gradually became so much engaged in their mourning rites, that they bestowed no longer any attention on Durward, of whose innocence they were probably satisfied from circumstances. It would certainly have been his wisest course to have left these wild people to their own courses, but he had been bred in almost wreck-

less contempt of danger, and felt all the eagerness of youthful curiosity.

The singular assemblage, both male and female, wore turbans and caps, more similar, in general appearance, to his own bonnet, than to those generally worn in France. Several of the men had curled black beards, and the complexion of all was nearly as dark as that of Africans. One or two, who seemed their chiefs, had some tawdry ornaments of silver about their necks and in their ears, with showy scarfs of yellow, or scarlet, or light green; but their legs and arms were bare, and the whole troop seemed wretched and squalid in appearance. There were no weapons among them that Durward saw, excepting the long knives with which they had lately menaced him, and one short crooked sabre, or Moorish sword, which was worn by an active-looking young man, who often laid his hand upon the hilt, while he surpassed the rest of the party in his extravagant expressions of grief, and seemed to mingle with them threats of vengeance.

The disordered and yelling group were so different in appearance from any beings whom Quentin had yet seen, that he was on the point of concluding them to be a party of Saracens, of those "heathen hounds," who were the opponents of gentle knights and Christian monarchs, in all the romances which he had heard or read, and was about to withdraw himself from a neighbourhood so peril-

ous, when a galloping of horse was heard, and the supposed Saracens, who had raised by this time the body of their comrade upon their shoulders, were at once charged by a party of French soldiers.

This sudden apparition changed the measured wailing of the mourners into irregular shrieks of terror. The body was thrown to the ground in an instant, and those who were around it, shewed the utmost and most dexterous activity in escaping, under the bellies as it were of the horses, and from the point of the lances which were levelled at them, with exclamations of "Down with the accursed heathen thieves—take and kill—bind them like beasts—spear them like wolves!"

These cries were accompanied with corresponding acts of violence; but such was the alertness of the fugitives, the ground being rendered unfavourable to the horsemen by thickets and bushes, that only two were struck down and made prisoners, one of whom was the young fellow with the sword, who had previously offered some resistance. Quentin, whom fortune seemed at this period to have chosen for the butt of her shafts, was at the same time seized by the soldiers, and his arms, in spite of his remonstrances, bound down with a cord; those who apprehended him, shewing a readiness and dispatch in the operation, which proved them to be no novices in matters of police.

Looking anxiously to the leader of the horse-

men, from whom he hoped to obtain liberty, Quentin knew not exactly whether to be pleased or alarmed upon recognizing in him the down-looking and silent companion of Maitre Pierre. True, whatever crime these strangers might be accused of, this officer might know, from the history of the morning, that he, Durward, had no connection with them whatsoever; but it was a more difficult question, whether this sullen man would be either a favourable judge or a willing witness in his behalf, and he felt doubtful whether he would mend his condition by making any direct application to him.

But there was little leisure for hesitation. "Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André," said the down-looking officer to two of his band, "these same trees stand here quite convenient. I will teach these misbelieving, thieving sorcerers, to interfere with the King's justice, when it has visited any of their accursed race. Dismount, my children, and do your office briskly."

Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André were in an instant on foot, and Quentin observed that they had each, at the crupper and pommel of his saddle, a coil or two of ropes, which they hastily undid, and shewed that, in fact, each coil formed a halter, with the fatal noose adjusted, ready for execution. The blood ran cold in Quentin's veins, when he saw three cords selected, and perceived that it was pro-

posed to put one around his own neck. He called on the officer loudly, reminded him of their meeting that morning, claimed the right of a free-born Scotchman, in a friendly and allied country, and denied any knowledge of the persons along with whom he was seized, or of their misdeeds.

The officer whom Durward thus addressed, scarce deigned to look at him while he was speaking, and took no notice whatsoever of the claim he preferred to prior acquaintance. He barely turned to one or two of the peasants who were now come forward, either to volunteer their evidence against the prisoners, or out of curiosity, and said gruffly, "Was yonder young fellow with the vagabonds?"

"That he was, sir, and it please your noble Provost-ship," answered one of the clowns; "he was the very first blasphemously to cut down the rascal whom his Majesty's justice most deservedly hung up, as we told your worship."

"I'll swear by God, and Saint Martin of Tours, to have seen him with their gang," said another, "when they pillaged our *metairie*."

"Nay, but, father," said a boy, "yonder heathen was black, and this youth is fair; yonder one had short curled hair, and this hath long fair locks."

"Ay, child," said the peasant, "and yonder one had a green coat and this a grey jerkin. But his worship, the Provost, knows that they can change

their complexions as easily as their jerkins, so that I am still minded he was the same."

"It is enough that you have seen him intermeddle with the course of the King's justice, by attempting to recover an executed traitor," said the officer.—"Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, dispatch."

"Stay, signior officer!" exclaimed the youth, in mortal agony—"here me speak—let me not die guiltlessly—my blood will be required of you by my countrymen in this world, and by heaven's justice in that which is to follow."

"I will answer my actions in both," said the Provost, coldly; and made a sign with his left hand to the executioners; then, with a smile of triumphant malice, touched with his fore-finger his right arm, which hung suspended in a scarf, disabled probably by the blow which Durward had dealt him that morning.

"Miserable, vindictive wretch!" answered Quentin, persuaded by that action that private revenge was the sole motive of this man's rigour, and that no mercy whatever was to be expected from him.

"The poor youth raves," said the functionary; "speak a word of comfort to him ere he make his transit, Trois-Eschelles; thou art a comfortable man in such cases, when a confessor is not to be

had. Give him one minute of ghostly advice, and dispatch matters in the next. I must proceed on the rounds.—Soldiers, follow me!"

The Provost rode on, followed by his guard, excepting two or three who were left to assist in the execution. The unhappy youth cast after him an eye almost darkened by despair, and thought he heard, in every tramp of his horse's retreating hoofs, the last slight chance of his safety vanish. He looked around him in agony, and was surprised, even in that moment, to see the stoical indifference of his fellow-prisoners. They had previously testified every sign of fear, and made every effort to escape; but now, when secured, and destined apparently to inevitable death, they awaited its arrival with the most stoical indifference. The scene of fate before them, gave, perhaps, a more yellow tinge to their swarthy cheeks; but it neither agitated their features, nor quenched the stubborn haughtiness of their eye. They seemed like foxes, which, after all their wiles and artful attempts at escape are exhausted, die with a silent and sullen fortitude, which wolves and bears, the fiercer objects of the chase, do not exhibit.

They were undaunted by the conduct of the fatal executioners, who went about their work with more deliberation than their master had recommended, and which probably arose from their having acquired by habit a kind of pleasure in the discharge of

their horrid office. We pause an instant to describe them, because, under a tyranny, whether despotic or popular, the character of the hangman becomes a subject of grave importance.

These functionaries were essentially different in their appearance and manners. Louis used to call them Democritus and Heraclitus, and their master, the Provost, termed them, *Jean-qui-pleure*, and *Jean-qui-rit*.

Trois-Eschelles was a tall, thin, ghastly man, with a peculiar gravity of visage, and a large rosary round his neck, the use of which he was accustomed piously to offer to those sufferers on whom he did his duty. He had one or two Latin texts continually in his mouth on the nothingness and vanity of human life; and, had it been regular to have enjoyed such a plurality, he might have held the office of confessor to the jail in commendam with that of executioner. Petit-André, on the contrary, was a joyous-looking, round, active, little fellow, who rolled about in execution of his duty as if it was the most diverting occupation in the world. He seemed to have a sort of fond affection for his victims, and always spoke of them in kindly and affectionate terms. They were his poor honest fellows, his pretty dears, his gossips, his good old fathers, as their age or sex might be; and as Trois-Eschelles endeavoured to inspire them with a philosophical or religious regard to futurity, Petit-

André seldom failed to refresh them with a jest or two, to make them pass from life as something that was ludicrous, contemptible, and not worthy of serious consideration.

I cannot tell why or wherefore it was, but these two excellent persons, notwithstanding the variety of their talents, and the rare occurrence of such among persons of their profession, were both more utterly detested than, perhaps, any creatures of their kind, whether before or since; and the only doubt of those who knew aught of them was, whether the grave and pathetic Trois-Eschelles, or the frisky, comic, alert Petit-André, was the object of the greatest fear or of the deepest execration. It is certain they bore the palm in both particulars over every hangman in France, unless it were perhaps their master, Tristan l'Hermite, the renowned Provost-Marshal, or *his* master, Louis XI.

It must not be supposed that these reflections were of Quentin Durward's making. Life, death, time, and eternity, were swimming before his eyes —a stunning and overwhelming prospect, from which human nature recoiled in its weakness, though human pride would fain have borne up. He addressed himself to the God of his fathers; and when he did so, the little rude and unroofed chapel, which now held almost all his race but himself, rushed on his recollection. "Our feudal enemies gave us graves in our own land," he thought,

" but I must feed the ravens and kites of a foreign land, like an excommunicated felon." The tears gushed involuntarily from his eyes. Trois-Eschelles, touching one shoulder, gravely congratulated him on his heavenly disposition for death, and pathetically exclaiming, *Beati qui in Domino moriuntur*, remarked the soul was happy that left the body while the tear was in the eye. Petit-André, slapping the other shoulder, called out, " Courage, my fair son! since you must begin the dance, let the ball open gaily, for all the rebees are in tune," twitching the halter at the same time, to give point to his joke. As the youth turned his dismayed looks, first on one and then on the other, they made their meaning plainer by gently urging him forward to the fatal tree, and bidding him be of good courage, for it would be over in a moment.

In this fatal predicament, the youth cast a distracted look around him. " Is there any good Christian who hears me," he said, " that will tell Ludovic Lesly of the Scottish Guard, called in this country Le Balafré, that his nephew is here basely murthered?"

The words were spoken in good time, for an Archer of the Scottish Guard, attracted by the preparations for the execution, was standing by, with one or two other chance-passengers, to witness what was passing.

" Take heed what you do," he said to the execu-

tioners; "if this young man be of Scottish birth, I will not permit him to have foul play."

"Heaven forbid, Sir Cavalier," said Trois-Eschelles; "but we must obey our orders," drawing Durward forward by one arm.

"The shortest play is ever the fairest," said Petit-André, pulling him onward by the other.

But Quentin had heard words of comfort, and, exerting his strength, he suddenly shook off both the finishers of the law, and, with his arms still bound, ran to the Scottish Archer. "Stand by me," he said in his own language, "countryman, for the love of Scotland and Saint Andrew! I am innocent—I am your own native landsman. Stand by me, as you shall answer at the last day!"

"By Saint Andrew! they shall make at you through me," said the Archer, and unsheathed his sword.

"Cut my bonds, countryman," said Quentin, "and I will do something for myself."

This was done with a touch of the Archer's weapon; and the liberated captive, springing suddenly on one of the Provost's guard, wrested from him a halberd with which he was armed; "And now," he said, "come on, if you dare!"

The two officers whispered together.

"Ride thou after the Provost-Marshal," said Trois-Eschelles, "and I will detain them here,

if I can.—Soldiers of the Provost's guard, stand to your arms."

Petit André mounted his horse and left the field, and the other Marshals-men in attendance drew together so hastily at the command of Trois-Eschelles, that they suffered the other two prisoners to make their escape during the confusion. Perhaps they were not very anxious to detain them; for they had of late been sated with the blood of such wretches, and, like other ferocious animals, were, through long slaughter, become tired of carnage. But the pretext was, that they thought themselves immediately called upon to attend to the safety of Trois-Eschelles; for there was a jealousy, which occasionally led to open quarrels betwixt the Scottish Archers and the Marshal-guards, who executed the orders of their Provost.

"We are strong enough to beat the proud Scots twice over, if it be your pleasure," said one of these soldiers to Trois-Eschelles.

But that cautious official made a sign to him to remain quiet, and addressed the Scottish Archer with great civility. "Surely, sir, this is a great insult to the Provost-Marshal, that you should presume to interfere with the course of the King's justice, duly and lawfully committed to his charge; and it is no act of justice to me, who am in lawful possession of my criminal. Neither is it a well-

meant kindness to the youth himself, seeing that fifty opportunities of hanging him may occur, without his being found in so happy a state of preparation as he was before your ill-advised interference."

"If my young countryman," said the Scot, smiling, "be of opinion I have done him an injury, I will return him to your charge without a word more dispute."

"No, no!—for the love of Heaven, no!" exclaimed Quentin. "I would rather you swept my head off with your long sword—it would better become my birth, than to die by the hands of such a foul churl."

"Hear how he revileth!" said the finisher of the law. "Alas! how soon our best resolutions pass away!—he was in a blessed frame for departure but now, and in two minutes he has become a contemner of authorities."

"Tell me at once," said the Archer, "what has this young man done?"

"Interfered to take down the dead body of a criminal, when the *fleur-de-lys* was marked on the tree where he was hung with my own proper hand," said the executioner.

"How is this, young man?" said the Archer; "how came you to have committed such an offence?"

"As I desire your protection," answered Durward, "I will tell you the truth as if I were at

confession. I saw a man struggling on the tree, and I went to cut him down out of mere humanity. I thought neither of fleur-de-lys nor of clove-gilliflower, and had no more idea of offending the King of France than our Father the Pope."

"What a murrain had you to do with the dead body, then? You'll see them hanging, in the rear of this gentleman, like grapes on every tree, and you will have enough to do in this country if you go a gleaning after the hangman. However, I will not quit a countryman's cause if I can help it.—Hark ye, Master Marshals-man, you see this is entirely a mistake. You should have some compassion on so young a traveller. In our country at home he has not been accustomed to see such active proceedings as yours and your master's."

"Not for want of need of them, Signior Archer," said Petit-André, who returned at this moment. "Stand fast, Trois-Eschelles, for here comes the Provost-Marshal; we shall presently see how he will relish having his work taken out of his hand before it is finished."

"And in good time," said the Archer, "here come some of my comrades."

Accordingly, as the Provost Tristan rode up with his patrole on one side of the little hill which was the scene of the altercation, four or five Archers came as hastily up on the other, and at their head the Balafré himself.

Upon this urgency, Lesly shewed none of that indifference towards his nephew of which Quentin had in his heart accused him; for he no sooner saw his comrade and Durward standing upon their defence, than he exclaimed, "Cunningham, I thank thee.—Gentlemen—comrades, lend me your aid—It is a young Scottish gentleman—my nephew—Lindesay—Guthrie—Tyrie, draw, and strike in."

There was now every prospect of a desperate scuffle between the parties, who were not so disproportioned in numbers, but that the better arms of the Scottish cavaliers gave them an equal chance of victory. But the Provost-Marshal, either doubting the issue of the conflict, or aware that it would be disagreeable to the King, made a sign to his followers to forbear from violence, while he demanded of Balafré, who now put himself forward as the head of the other party, "What he, a cavalier of the King's Body Guard, purposed by opposing the execution of a criminal?"

"I deny that I do so," answered the Balafré. "Saint Martin! there is, I think, some difference between the execution of a criminal, and the slaughter of my own nephew."

"Your nephew may be a criminal as well as another, Signor," said the Provost-Marshal; "and every stranger in France is amenable to the laws of France."

"Yes, but we have privileges, we Scottish Archers," said Balafré; "Have we not, comrades?"

"Yes, yes," they all exclaimed together. "Privileges—privileges! Long live King Louis—long live the bold Balafré—loug live the Scottish Guard—and death to all who would infringe our privileges!"

"Take reason with you, gentlemen cavaliers," said the Provost-Marshal; "consider my commission."

"We will have no reason at your hand," said Cunningham; "our own officers shall do us reason. We will be judged by the King's grace, or by our own Captain, now that the Lord High Constable is not in presence."

"And we will be hanged by none," said Lindesay, "but Sandie Wilson, the auld Marshals-man of our ain body."

"It would be a positive cheating of Sandie, who is as honest a man as ever tied noose upon hemp, did we give way to any other proceeding," said the Balafré. "Were I to be hanged myself, no other should tie tippet about my craig."

"But hear ye," said the Provost-Marshal, "this young fellow belongs not to you, and cannot share what you call your privileges."

"What we *call* our privileges, all shall admit to be such," said Cunningham.

"We will not hear them questioned!" was the universal cry of the Archers.

"Ye are mad, my masters," said Tristan l'Hermite—"No one disputes your privileges; but this youth is not one of you."

"He is *my* nephew," said the Balafré, with a triumphant air.

"But no Archer of the Guard, I think," retorted Tristan l'Hermite.

The Archers looked on each other in some uncertainty.

"Stand to it yet, comrade," whispered Cunningham to Balafré—"Say he is engaged with us."

"Saint Martin! you say well, fair kinsman," answered Lesly; and, raising his voice, swore that he had that day enrolled his kinsman as one of his own retinue.

This declaration was a decisive argument.

"It is well, gentlemen," said the Provost Tristan, who was aware of the King's nervous apprehension of disaffection creeping in among his Guards —"You know, as you say, your privileges, and it is not my duty to have brawls with the King's Guards, if it is to be avoided. But I will report this matter for the King's own decision; and I would have you to be aware, that, in doing so, I act more mildly than perhaps my duty warrants me."

So saying, he put his troop into motion, while the Archers remaining on the spot, held a hasty consultation what was next to be done.

"We must report the matter to Lord Crawford, our Captain, in the first place, and have the young fellow's name put on the roll."

"But, gentlemen, and my worthy friends and preservers," said Quentin, with some hesitation, "I have not yet determined whether to take service with you or no."

"Then settle in your own mind," said his uncle, "whether you choose to do so, or be hanged—for I promise you, that, nephew of mine as you are, I see no other chance of your 'scaping the gallows."

This was an unanswerable argument, and reduced Quentin at once to acquiesce in what he might have otherwise considered as no very agreeable proposal; but the recent escape from the halter, which had been actually around his neck, would probably have reconciled him to a worse alternative than was proposed.

"He must go home with us to our caserne," said Cunningham; "there is no safety for him out of our bounds, whilst these man-hunters are prowling about."

"May I not then abide for this night at the hostelry where I breakfasted, fair uncle?" said the youth—thinking, perhaps, like many a new recruit, that even a single night of freedom was something gained.

"Yes, fair nephew," answered his uncle, ironically, "that we may have the pleasure of fishing

you out of some canal or moat, or perhaps out of a loop of the Loire, knit up in a sack, for the greater convenience of swimming—for that is like to be the end on't.—The Provost-Marshal smiled on us when we parted," continued he, addressing Cunningham, " and that is a sign his thoughts were dangerous.'

" I care not for his danger," said Cunningham ; " such game as we are is beyond his bird-bolts. But I would have thee tell the whole to the Devil's Oliver, who is always a good friend to the Scottish Guard, and will see Father Louis before the Provost can, for he is to shave him to-morrow."

" But hark you," said Balafré, " it is ill going to Oliver empty-handed, and I am as bare as the birch in December."

" So are we all," said Cunningham—" Oliver must not scruple to take our Scottish words for once. We will make up something handsome among us against the next pay-day ; and if *he* expects to share, let me tell you, the pay-day will come about all the sooner."

" And now for the Chateau," said Balafré ; " and my nephew shall tell us by the way how he brought the Provost-Marshal on his shoulders, that we may know how to shape our report both to Crawford and Oliver."

CHAP. VII.

THE ENROLMENT.

Justice of Peace.—Here, hand me down the Statute—read the articles—
Swear, kiss the book—subscribe, and be a hero;
Drawing a portion from the public stock
For deeds of valour to be done hereafter—
Sixpence per day, subsistence and arrears.

The Recruiting Officer.

AN attendant upon the Archers having been dismounted, Quentin Durward was accommodated with his horse, and, in company of his martial countrymen, rode at a round pace towards the Castle of Plessis, about to become, although on his own part involuntarily, an inhabitant of that gloomy fortress, the outside of which had, that morning, struck him with so much surprise.

In the meanwhile, in answer to his uncle's repeated interrogations, he gave him an exact account of the accident which had that morning brought him into so much danger. Although he himself saw nothing in his narrative save what was affecting, he found it was received with much laughter by his escort.

"And yet it is no good jest either," said his uncle, "for what, in the devil's name, could lead the senseless boy to meddle with the body of a cursed misbelieving Jewish Moorish pagan?"

"Had he quarrelled with the Marshals-men about a pretty wench, as Michael of Moffat did, there had been more sense in it," said Cunningham.

"But I think it touches our honour, that Tristan and his people pretend to confound our Scottish bonnets with these pilfering vagabonds' *tocques* and *turbands*, as they call them," said Lindesay —"If they have not eyes to see the difference, they must be taught by rule of hand. But it's my belief, Tristan but pretends to mistake, that he may snap up the kindly Scots that come over to see their kinsfolks."

"May I ask, kinsman," said Quentin, "what sort of people these are of whom you speak?"

"In troth you may ask," said his uncle, "but I know not, fair nephew, who is able to answer you. Not I, I am sure, although I know, it may be, as much as other people; but they have appeared in this land within a year or two, just as a flight of locusts might do."

"Ay," said Lindesay, "and Jacques Bonhomme, (that is our name for the peasant, young man,—you will learn our way of talk by times)—honest Jacques, I say, cares little what wind either brings

them or the locusts, so he but knows any gale that would carry them away again."

"Do they do so much evil?" said the young man.

"Evil?—why, boy, they are heathens, or Jews, or Mahommedans at the least, and neither worship Our Lady nor the Saints—(crossing himself)—and steal what they can lay hands on, and sing, and tell fortunes," added Cunningham.

"And they say there are some goodly wenches amongst these women," said Guthrie; "but Cunningham knows that best."

"How, brother!" said Cunningham; "I trust ye mean me no reproach?"

"I am sure I said ye none," answered Guthrie.

"I will be judged by the company," said Cunningham.—"Ye said as much as that I, a Scottish gentleman, and living within pale of holy church, had a fair friend among these off-scourings of Heathenesse."

"Nay, nay," said Balafré, "he did but jest—We will have no quarrels among comrades."

"We must have no such jesting then," said Cunningham, murmuring as if he had been speaking to his own beard.

"Be there such vagabonds in other lands than France?" said Lindesay.

"Ay, in good sooth, are there—tribes of them have appeared in Germany, and in Spain, and in

England," answered Balafré. "By the blessing of good Saint Andrew, Scotland is free of them yet."

"Scotland," said Cunningham, "is too cold a country for locusts, and too poor a country for thieves."

"Or perhaps John Highlander will suffer no thieves to thrive there but his own," said Guthrie.

"I let you all know," said Balafré, "that I come from the Braes of Angus, and have gentle Highland kin in Glen-Isla,[1] and I will not have the Highlanders slandered."

"You will not deny that they are cattle-lifters?" said Guthrie.

"To drive a spreagh, or so, is no thievery," said Balafré, "and that I will maintain when and how you dare."

"For shame, comrade," said Cunningham; "who quarrels now?—the young man should not see such mad misconstruction.—Come, here we are at the Chateau. I will bestow a runlet of wine to have a rouse in friendship, and drink to Scotland, Highland and Lowland both, if you will meet me at dinner at my quarters."

"Agreed—agreed," said Balafré; "and I will bestow another, to wash away unkindness, and to drink a health to my nephew on his first entrance to our corps."

At their approach, the wicket was opened, and

the draw-bridge fell. One by one they entered; but when Quentin appeared, the sentinels crossed their pikes, and commanded him to stand, while bows were bent and harquebusses aimed at him from the walls—a rigour of vigilance used, notwithstanding that the young stranger came in company of a party of the garrison, nay, of the very body which furnished the sentinels who were then upon duty.

Balafré, who had remained by his nephew's side on purpose, gave the necessary explanations, and, after some considerable hesitation and delay, the youth was conveyed under a strong guard to the Lord Crawford's apartment.

This Scottish nobleman was one of the last reliques of the gallant band of Scottish lords and knights who had so long and so truly served Charles VI. in those bloody wars which decided the independence of the French crown, and the expulsion of the English. He had fought, when a boy, abreast with Douglas and with Buchan, had ridden beneath the banner of the Maid of Arc, and was perhaps one of the last of those associates of Scottish chivalry who had so willingly drawn their swords for the *fleur-de-lys*, against the "auld enemies of England." Changes which had taken place in the Scottish kingdom, and perhaps his having become habituated to French climate and manners, had induced the old Baron to resign all thoughts

of returning to his native country, the rather that the high office which he held in the household of Louis, and his own frank and loyal character, had gained a considerable ascendancy over the King, who, though in general no ready believer in human virtue or honour, trusted and confided in those of the Lord Crawford, and allowed him the greater influence, because he was never known to interfere excepting in matters which concerned his charge.

Balafré and Cunningham followed Durward and the guard to the apartment of their officer, by whose dignified appearance, as well as with the respect paid to him by these proud soldiers, who seemed to respect no one else, the young man was much and strongly impressed.

Lord Crawford was tall, and through advanced age had become gaunt and thin; yet retaining in his sinews the strength, at least, if not the elasticity, of youth, he was able to endure the weight of his armour during a march as well as the youngest man who rode in his band. He was hard-favoured, with a scarred and weather-beaten countenance, and an eye that had looked upon death as his play-fellow in thirty pitched battles, but which nevertheless expressed a good-humoured contempt of danger, rather than the ferocious courage of a mercenary soldier. His tall erect figure was at present wrapped in a loose chamber-gown, secured around him by his buff belt, in which was suspended his richly-

hilted poniard. He had round his neck the collar and badge of the order of Saint Michael. He sat upon a couch covered with deer's hide, and with spectacles on his nose, (then a recent invention,) was labouring to read a huge manuscript called the *Rosier de la Guerre*, a code of military and civil policy which Louis had compiled for the benefit of his son the Dauphin, and upon which he was desirous to have the opinion of the experienced Scottish warrior.

Lord Crawford laid his book somewhat peevishly aside upon the entrance of these unexpected visitors, and demanded, in his broad national dialect, "What, in the foul fiend's name, they lacked now?"

Balafré, with more respect than perhaps he would have shewn to Louis himself, stated at full length the circumstances in which his nephew was placed, and humbly requested his Lordship's protection. Lord Crawford listened very attentively. He could not but smile at the simplicity with which the youth had interfered in behalf of the hanged criminal, but he shook his head at the account which he received of the ruffle betwixt the Scottish Archers and the Provost-Marshal's guard.

"How often," he said, "will you bring me such ill-winded pirns to ravel out? How often must I tell you, and especially both you, Ludovic Lesly, and you, Archie Cunninghame, that the foreign soldier should bear himself modestly and decorously

towards the people of the country, if you would not have the whole dogs of the town at your heels? However, if you must have a bargain, I would rather it were with that loon of a Provost than any one else; and I blame you less for this onslaught than for other frays that you have made, Ludovic, for it was but natural and kind-like to help your young kinsman. This simple bairn must come to no skaith neither; so give me the roll of the company yonder down from the shelf, and we will even add his name to the troop, that he may enjoy the privileges."

"May it please your Lordship—" said Durward——

"Is the lad crazed!" exclaimed his uncle—"Would you speak to his Lordship, without a question asked?"

"Patience, Ludovic," said Lord Crawford, "and let us hear what the bairn has to say."

"Only this, if it may please your Lordship," replied Quentin, "that I told my uncle formerly I had some doubts about entering this service. I have now to say that they are entirely removed, since I have seen the noble and experienced commander under whom I am to serve; for there is authority in your look."

"Weel said, my bairn," said the old Lord, not insensible to the compliment; "we have had some experience, had God sent us grace to improve by it,

both in service and in command. There you stand, Quentin, in our honourable corps of Scottish Bodyguards, as esquire to your uncle, and serving under his lance. I trust you will do well, for you should be a right man-at-arms, if all be good that is upcome, and you are come of a gentle kindred.—Ludovic, you will see that your kinsman follows his exercise diligently, for we will have spears breaking one of these days."

"By my hilts, and I am glad of it, my Lord—this peace makes cowards of us all. I myself feel a sort of decay of spirit, closed up in this cursed dungeon of a Castle."

"Well, a bird whistled in my ear," continued Lord Crawford, "that the old banner will be soon dancing in the field again."

"I will drink a cup the deeper this evening to that very tune," said Balafré.

"Thou wilt drink to any tune," said Lord Crawford; "and I fear me, Ludovic, you will drink a bitter browst of your own brewing one day."

Lesly, a little abashed, replied, "that it had not been his wont for many a day; but his Lordship knew the use of the company, to have a carouse to the health of a new comrade."

"True," said the old leader, "I had forgot the occasion. I will send a few stoups of wine to assist your carouse; but let it be over by sun-set.

And, hark ye—let the soldiers for duty be carefully pricked off; and see that none of them be more or less partakers of your debauch."

"Your Lordship shall be lawfully obeyed," said Ludovic, "and your health duly remembered."

"Perhaps," said Lord Crawford, "I may look in myself upon your mirth—just to see that all is carried decently."

"Your Lordship shall be most dearly welcome," said Ludovic; and the whole party retreated in high spirits to prepare for their military banquet, to which Lesly invited about a score of his comrades, who were pretty much in the habit of making their mess together.

A soldier's festival is generally a very extempore affair, providing there is enough of meat and drink to be had; but, on the present occasion, Ludovic bustled about to procure some better wine than ordinary; observing, that "the old Lord was the surest gear in their aught, and that, while he preached sobriety to them, he himself, after drinking at the royal table as much wine as he could honestly come by, never omitted any creditable opportunity to fill up the evening over the wine-pot; so you must prepare, comrades," he said, "to hear the old histories of the battles of Vernoil and Beaugé."

The Gothic apartment in which they generally met was, therefore, hastily put into the best order;

their grooms were dispatched to collect green rushes to spread upon the floor; and banners, under which the Scottish Guard had marched to battle, or which they had taken from the enemies' ranks, were displayed, by way of tapestry, over the table, and around the walls of the chamber.

The next point was, to invest the young recruit as hastily as possible with the dress and appropriate arms of the Guard, that he might appear in every respect the sharer of its important privileges, in virtue of which, and by the support of his countrymen, he might freely brave the power and the displeasure of the Provost-Marshal—although the one was known to be as formidable, as the other was unrelenting.

The banquet was joyous in the highest degree; and the guests gave vent to the whole current of their national partiality on receiving into their ranks a recruit from their beloved father-land. Old Scottish songs were sung, old tales of Scottish heroes told—the achievements of their fathers, and the scenes in which they were wrought, were recalled to mind; and, for a time, the rich plains of Touraine seemed converted into the mountainous and sterile regions of Caledonia.

When their enthusiasm was at high flood, and each was endeavouring to say something to enhance the dear remembrance of Scotland, it received a new impulse from the arrival of Lord Craw-

ford, who, as Balafré had well prophesied, sat as it were on thorns at the royal board, until an opportunity occurred of making his escape to the revelry of his own countrymen. A chair of state had been reserved for him at the upper end of the table; for, according to the manners of the age, and the constitution of that body, although their leader and commander under the King and High Constable, the members of the corps, (as we should now say the privates,) being all ranked as noble by birth, their Captain sat with them at the same table without impropriety, and might mingle when he chose in their festivity, without derogation from his dignity as commander.

At present, however, Lord Crawford declined occupying the seat prepared for him, and bidding them "hold themselves merry," stood looking on the revel with a countenance which seemed greatly to enjoy it.

"Let him alone," whispered Cunningham to Lindesay, as the latter offered the wine to their noble Captain, "let him alone—hurry no man's cattle—let him take it of his own accord."

In fact, the old Lord, who at first smiled, shook his head, and placed the untasted wine-cup before him, began presently, as if it were in absence of mind, to sip a little of the contents, and in doing so, fortunately recollected that it would be ill luck did he not drink a draught to the health of the

gallant lad who had joined them this day. The pledge was filled, and answered, as may be well supposed, with many a joyous shout, when the old leader proceeded to acquaint them that he had possessed Master Oliver with an account of what had passed that day: "And as," he said, "the scraper of chins hath no great love for the stretcher of throats, he has joined me in obtaining from the King an order, commanding the Provost to suspend all proceedings, under whatsoever pretence, against Quentin Durward; and to respect, on all occasions, the privileges of the Scottish Guard."

Another shout broke forth, the cups were again filled, till the wine sparkled on the brim, and there was an acclaim to the health of the noble Lord Crawford, the brave conservator of the privileges and rights of his countrymen. The good old Lord could not but in courtesy do reason to this pledge also, and gliding into the ready chair, as it were, without reflecting what he was doing, he caused Quentin to come up beside him, and assailed him with many more questions concerning the state of Scotland, and the great families there, than he was well able to answer; while ever and anon, in the course of his queries, the good Lord kissed the wine-cup by way of parenthesis, remarking, that sociality became Scottish gentlemen, but that young men, like Quentin, ought to practise it cautiously, lest it might degenerate into excess; upon which

occasion he uttered many excellent things, until his own tongue, although employed in the praises of temperance, began to articulate something thicker than usual. It was now that, while the military ardour of the company augmented with each flagon which they emptied, Cunningham called on them to drink the speedy hoisting of the *Oriflamme* (the royal banner of France.)

"And a breeze of Burgundy to fan it!" echoed Lindesay.

"With all the soul that is left in this worn body do I accept the pledge, bairns," echoed Lord Crawford; "and as old as I am, I trust I may see it flutter yet. Hark ye, my mates, (for wine had made him something communicative,) ye are all true servants to the French crown, and wherefore should ye not know there is an envoy come from Duke Charles of Burgundy, with a message of an angry favour."

"I saw the Count of Crevecœur's equipage, horses and retinue," said another of the guests, "down at the inn yonder, at the Mulberry Grove. They say the King will not admit him into the Castle."

"Now, Heaven send him an ungracious answer!" says Guthrie; "but what is it he complains of?"

"A world of grievances upon the frontier," said Lord Crawford; "and latterly, that the King hath received under his protection a lady of his land, a

young Countess, who hath fled from Dijon, because, being a ward of the Duke, he would have her marry his favourite, Campo-basso."

"And hath she actually come hither alone, my Lord?" said Lindesay.

"Nay, not altogether alone, but with the old Countess, her kinswoman, who hath yielded to her cousin's wishes in this matter."

"And will the King," said Cunningham, "he being the Duke's feudal sovereign, interfere between the Duke and his ward, over whom Charles hath the same right, which, were he himself dead, the King would have over the heiress of Burgundy?"

"The King will be ruled as he is wont, by rules of policy; and you know," continued Crawford, "that he hath not publicly received these ladies, nor placed them under the protection of his daughter, the Lady of Beaujeu, or the Princess Joan, so, doubtless, he will be guided by circumstances. He is our master—but it is no treason to say, he shall chase with the hounds, and run with the hare, with any Prince in Christendom."

"But the Duke of Burgundy understands no such doubling," said Cunningham.

"No," answered the old Lord; "and, therefore, it is like to make work between them."

"Well—Saint Andrew further the fray," said Balafré. "I had it foretold me ten, ay, twenty

years since, that I was to make the fortune of my house by marriage. Who knows what may happen, if once we come to fight for honour and ladies' love, as they do in the old romaunts?"

"*Thou* name ladies' love, with such a trench in thy visage!" said Guthrie.

"As well not love at all, as love a Bohemian woman of Heathenesse," answered Balafré.

"Hold there, comrades," said Lord Crawford; "no tilting with sharp weapons, no jesting with keen scoffs—friends all. And for the lady, she is too wealthy to fall to a poor Scotch lord, or I would put in my own claim, fourscore years and all, or not very far from it. But here is her health, nevertheless, for they say she is a lamp of beauty."

"I think I saw her," said another soldier, "when I was upon guard this morning at the inner barrier; but she was more like a dark lantern than a lamp, for she and another were brought into the Chateau in close litters."

"Shame! shame! Arnot!" said Lord Crawford; "a soldier on duty should say nought of what he sees. Besides," he added after a pause, his own curiosity prevailing over the shew of discipline which he had thought it necessary to exert, "why should these litters contain this very same Countess Isabella de Croye?"

"Nay, my Lord," replied Arnot, "I know nothing of it save this, that my coutelier was airing

my horses in the road to the village, and fell in with Doguin the muleteer, who brought back the litters to the inn, for they belong to the fellow of the Mulberry-grove yonder—he of the Fleur-de-Lys, I mean—and so Doguin asked Saunders Steed to take a cup of wine, as they were acquainted, which he was no doubt willing enough to do——"

"No doubt—no doubt," said the old Lord; "it is a thing I wish were corrected among you, gentlemen; but all your grooms and couteliers, and jackmen, as we should call them in Scotland, are but too ready to take a cup of wine with any one—It is a thing perilous in war, and must be amended. But, Andrew Arnot, this is a long tale of yours, and we will cut it with a drink; as the Highlander says, *Skeoch doch nan skial*, and that's good Gaelic.—Here is to the Countess Isabella of Croye, and a better husband to her than Campo-basso, who is a base Italian cullion!—And now, Andrew Arnot, what said the muleteer to this yeoman of thine?"

"Why he told him in secrecy, if it please your Lordship," continued Arnot, "that these two ladies whom he had presently before convoyed up to the Castle in the close litters, were great ladies, who had been living in secret at his master's house for some days, and that the King had visited them more than once very privately, and had done them great honour; and that they had fled up to the

Castle, as he believed, for fear of the Count de Crevecœur, the Duke of Burgundy's ambassador, whose approach was just announced by an advanced courier."

"Ay, Andrew, come you there to me?" said Guthrie; "then I will be sworn it was the Countess whose voice I heard singing to the lute, as I came even now through the inner court—the sound came from the bay-windows of the Dauphin's Tower; and such melody was there as no one ever heard before in the Castle of Plessis of the Park. By my faith, I thought it was music of the Fairy Melusina's making. There I stood—though I knew your board was covered, and that you were all impatient—there I stood, like——"

"Like an ass, Johnny Guthrie," said his commander; "thy long nose smelling the dinner, thy long ears hearing the music, and thy short discretion not enabling thee to tell which of them thou didst prefer.—Hark! is not that the Cathedral bell tolling to vespers?—Sure it cannot be that time yet?—The mad old sexton has toll'd even-song an hour too soon."

"In faith, the bell rings but too justly the hour," said Cunningham; "yonder the sun is sinking on the west side of the fair plain."

"Ay," said the Lord Crawford, "is it even so?—Well, lads, we must live within compass—Fair and soft goes far—slow fire makes sweet malt—to

be merry and wise is a sound proverb.—One other rouse to the weal of old Scotland, and then each man to his duty."

The parting-cup was emptied, and the guests dismissed—the stately old Baron taking the Balafré's arm, under pretence of giving him some instructions concerning his nephew, but, perhaps, in reality, lest his own lofty pace should seem in the public eye less steady than became his rank and high command. A solemn countenance did he bear as he passed through the two courts which separated his lodging from the festal chamber, and solemn as the gravity of a hogshead was the farewell caution, with which he prayed Ludovic to attend his nephew's motions, especially in the matters of wenches and wine-cups.

Meanwhile, not a word that was spoken concerning the beautiful Countess Isabelle had escaped the young Durward, who, conducted into a small cabin, which he was to share with his uncle's page, made his new and lowly abode the scene of much high musing. The reader will easily imagine that the young soldier should build a fine romance on such a foundation as the supposed, or rather the assumed, identification of the Maiden of the Turret, to whose lay he had listened with so much interest, and the fair cup-bearer of Maitre Pierre, with a fugitive Countess, of rank and wealth, flying the pursuit of a hated lover, the favourite of an op-

pressive guardian, who abused his feudal power. There was an interlude in Quentin's vision concerning Maitre Pierre, who seemed to exercise such authority even over the formidable officer from whose hands he had that day, with much difficulty, made his escape. At length the youth's reveries, which had been respected by little Will Harper, the companion of his cell, were broken in upon by the return of his uncle, who commanded Quentin to bed, that he might arise betimes in the morning, and attend him to his Majesty's antichamber, to which he was called by his hour of duty, along with five of his comrades.

CHAP. VIII.

THE ENVOY.

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;
For ere thou canst report I will be there,
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard—
So, hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath.

King John.

HAD sloth been a temptation by which Durward was easily beset, the noise with which the *caserne* of the guards resounded after the first toll of primes, had certainly banished the syren from his couch; but the discipline of his father's tower, and of the convent of Aberbrothick, had taught him to start with the dawn; and he did on his clothes gaily, amid the sounding of bugles and the clash of armour, which announced the change of the vigilant guards—some of whom were returning to barracks after their nightly duty, whilst others were marching out to that of the morning—and others, again, amongst whom was his uncle, were arming for immediate attendance upon the person of Louis. Quentin Durward soon put on, with the feelings of so young a man on such an occasion, the splen-

did dress and arms appertaining to his new situation; and his uncle, who looked with great accuracy and interest to see that he was completely fitted out in every respect, did not conceal his satisfaction at the improvement which had been thus made in his nephew's appearance. "If thou doest prove as faithful and bold as thou art well-favoured, I shall have in thee one of the handsomest and best esquires in the Guard, which cannot but be an honour to thy mother's family. Follow me to the presence-chamber; and see thou keep close at my shoulder."

So saying, he took up a partizan, large, weighty, and beautifully inlaid and ornamented, and directing his nephew to assume a lighter weapon of a similar description, they proceeded to the inner-court of the palace, where their comrades, who were to form the guard of the interior apartments, were already drawn up, and under arms—the squires each standing behind their masters, to whom they thus formed a second rank. Here were also in attendance many yeomen-prickers, with gallant horses and noble dogs, on which Quentin looked with such inquisitive delight, that his uncle was obliged more than once to remind him that they were not there for his private amusement, but for the King's, who had a strong passion for the chase, one of the few inclinations which he indulged, even when coming into competition with his course of policy; being

so strict a protector of the game in the royal forests, that it was currently said, you might kill a man with greater impunity than a stag.

On a signal given, the Guards were put into motion by the command of Balafré, who acted as officer upon the occasion; and, after some minutiæ of word and signal, which all went to shew the extreme and punctilious jealousy with which their duty was performed, they marched into the hall of audience, where the King was immediately expected.

New as Quentin was to scenes of splendour, the effect of that which was now before him rather disappointed the expectations which he had formed of the brilliancy of a Court. There were household officers, indeed, richly attired; there were guards gallantly armed, and there were domestics of various degrees: But he saw none of the ancient counsellors of the kingdom, none of the high officers of the crown, heard none of the names which in those days sounded an alarum to chivalry; saw none either of those generals or leaders, who, possessed of full prime of manhood, were the strength of France, or of the more youthful and fiery nobles, those early aspirants after honour, who were her pride. The jealous habits—the reserved manners—the deep and artful policy of the King, had estranged this splendid circle from the throne, and they were only called around it upon certain stated and formal occasions,

when they went reluctantly, and returned joyfully, as the animals in the fable are supposed to have approached and left the den of the lion.

The very few persons who seemed to be there in the character of counsellors, were mean-looking men, whose countenances sometimes expressed sagacity, but whose manners shewed they were called into a sphere for which their previous education and habits had qualified them but indifferently. One or two persons, however, did appear to Durward to possess a more noble mien, and the strictness of the present duty was not such as to prevent his uncle communicating the names of those whom he thus distinguished.

With the Lord Crawford, who was in attendance, dressed in the rich habit of his office, and holding a leading staff of silver in his hand, Quentin, as well as the reader, was already acquainted. Among others who seemed of quality, the most remarkable was the Count de Dunois, the son of that celebrated Dunois, known by the name of the Bastard of Orleans, who, fighting under the banner of Jeanne d'Arc, acted such a distinguished part in liberating France from the English yoke. His son well supported the high renown which had descended to him from such an honoured source; and, notwithstanding his connection with the royal family, and his hereditary popularity both with the nobles and the people, Dunois had, upon all occasions,

manifested such an open, frank loyalty of character, that he seemed to have escaped all suspicion, even on the part of the jealous Louis, who loved to see him near his person, and sometimes even called him to his councils. Although accounted complete in all the exercises of chivalry, and possessed of much of the character of what was then termed a perfect knight, the person of the Count was far from being a model of romantic beauty. He was under the common size, though very strongly built, and his legs rather curved outwards, into that make which is more convenient for horseback, than elegant for a pedestrian. His shoulders were broad, his hair black, his complexion swarthy, his arms remarkably long and nervous. The features of his countenance were irregular, even to ugliness; yet, after all, there was an air of conscious worth and nobility about the Count de Dunois, which stamped, at the first glance, the character of the high-born nobleman, and the undaunted soldier. His mien was bold and upright, his step free and manly, and the harshness of his countenance was dignified by a glance like an eagle, and a frown like a lion. His dress was a hunting suit, rather sumptuous than gay, and he acted on most occasions as Grand Huntsman, though we are not inclined to believe that he actually held the office.

Upon the arm of Dunois, walking with a step so slow and melancholy, that he seemed to rest on

his kinsman and supporter, came Louis Duke of Orleans, the first Prince of the blood royal, and to whom the guards and attendants rendered their homage as such. The jealously-watched object of Louis's suspicions, this Prince, who, failing the King's offspring, was heir to the kingdom, was not suffered to absent himself from Court, and, while residing there, was denied alike employment and countenance. The dejection which his degraded and almost captive state naturally impressed on the deportment of this unfortunate Prince, was at this moment greatly increased, by his consciousness that the King meditated, with respect to him, one of the most cruel and unjust actions which a tyrant could commit, by compelling him to give his hand to the Princess Joan of France, the younger daughter of Louis, to whom he had been contracted in infancy, but whose deformed person rendered the insisting upon such an agreement an act of abominable rigour.

The exterior of this unhappy Prince was in no respect distinguished by personal advantages; and in mind, he was of a gentle, mild, and beneficent disposition, qualities which were even visible through the veil of extreme dejection, with which his natural character was at present obscured. Quentin observed that he studiously avoided even looking at the Royal Guards, and when he returned their salute, that the Duke kept his eyes bent on the ground,

as if he feared the King's jealousy might have construed that gesture of ordinary courtesy, as arising from the purpose of establishing a separate and personal interest among them.

Very different was the conduct of the proud Cardinal and Prelate, John of Balue, the favourite minister of Louis for the time, whose rise and character bore as close a resemblance to that of Wolsey, as the difference betwixt the crafty and politic Louis, and the headlong and rash Henry VIII. of England, would permit. The former had raised his minister from the lowest rank, to the dignity, or at least to the emoluments, of Grand Almoner of France, loaded him with benefices, and obtained for him the hat of a Cardinal; and although he was too cautious to repose in the ambitious Balue the unbounded power and trust which Henry placed in Wolsey, yet he was more influenced by him than by any other of his avowed counsellors. The Cardinal, accordingly, had not escaped the error incidental to those who are suddenly raised to power from an obscure situation, for he entertained a strong persuasion, dazzled doubtless by the suddenness of his elevation, that his capacity was equal to intermeddling with affairs of every kind, even those most foreign to his profession and studies. Tall and ungainly in his person, he affected gallantry and admiration of the fair sex, although his manners rendered his pretensions absurd, and his profession

marked them as indecorous. Some male or female flatterer had, in evil hour, possessed him with the idea that there was much beauty of contour in a pair of huge substantial legs, which he had derived from his father, a car-man of Limoges; and with this idea he had become so infatuated, that he always had his cardinal's robes a little looped up on one side, that the sturdy proportion of his limbs might not escape observation. As he swept through the stately apartment in his crimson dress and rich cope, he stopped repeatedly to look at the arms and appointments of the cavaliers on guard, asked them several questions in an authoritative tone, and took upon him to censure some of them for what he termed irregularities of discipline, in language to which these experienced soldiers dared no reply, although it was plain they listened to it with impatience and with contempt.

"Is the King aware," said Dunois to the Cardinal, "that the Burgundian Envoy is peremptory in demanding an audience?"

"He is," answered the Cardinal; "and here, as I think, comes the all-sufficient Oliver Dain, to let us know his royal pleasure."

As he spoke, a remarkable person, who then divided the favour of Louis with the proud Cardinal himself, entered from the inner apartment, but without any of that important and consequential demeanour which marked the full-blown dignity

of the churchman. On the contrary, this was a little, pale, meagre man, whose black-silk jerkin and hose, without either coat, cloak, or cassock, were ill qualified to set off to advantage a very ordinary person. He carried a silver basin in his hand, and a napkin flung over his arm indicated his menial capacity. His visage was penetrating and quick, although he endeavoured to banish such expression from his features, by keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, as, with the stealthy and quiet pace of a cat, he seemed modestly rather to glide than to walk through the apartment. But though modesty may easily disguise worth, it cannot hide court-favour; and all attempts to steal unperceived through the presence-chamber were vain, on the part of one known to have such possession of the King's ear, as had been attained by his celebrated barber and groom of the chamber, Oliver le Dain, called sometimes Oliver le Mauvais, and sometimes Oliver le Diable, epithets derived from the unscrupulous cunning with which he assisted the execution of the schemes of his master's tortuous policy. At present he spoke earnestly for a few moments with the Count de Dunois, who instantly left the chamber, while the tonsor glided quietly back towards the royal apartment whence he had issued, every one giving place to him; which civility he only acknowledged by the most humble inclination of the body, excepting in a very few instances,

where he made one or two persons the subject of envy to all the other courtiers by whispering a single word in their ear; and at the same time muttering something of the duties of his place, he escaped from their replies, as well as from the eager solicitations of those who wished to attract his notice. Ludovic Lesly had the good fortune to be one of the individuals who, on the present occasion, was favoured by Oliver with a single word, to assure him that his matter was fortunately terminated.

Presently afterwards, he had another proof of the same agreeable tidings; for Tristan l'Hermite, the Provost-Marshal of the Royal Household, entered the apartment, and came straight to the place where Le Balafré was posted. This formidable officer's dress, which was very rich, had only the effect of making his sinister countenance and bad mien more strikingly remarkable, and the tone which he meant for conciliatory, was like nothing so much as the growling of a bear. The import of his words, however, was more amicable than the voice in which they were pronounced. He regretted the mistake which had fallen between them on the preceding day, and observed it was owing to the Sieur Le Balafré's nephew not wearing the uniform of his corps, or announcing himself as belonging to it, which had led him into the error for which he now asked forgiveness.

Ludovic Lesly made the necessary reply, and as

soon as Tristan had turned away, observed to his nephew, that they had now the distinction of having a mortal enemy from henceforward in the person of this dreaded officer. "But a soldier," said he, "who does his duty, may laugh at the Provost-Marshal."

Quentin could not help being of his uncle's opinion, for, as Tristan parted from them, it was with the look of angry defiance which the bear casts upon the hunter whose spear has wounded him. Indeed, even when less strongly moved, his sullen eye expressed a malevolence of purpose which made men shudder to meet his glance; and the thrill of the young Scot was the deeper and more abhorrent, that he seemed to himself still to feel on his shoulders the grasp of the two death-doing functionaries of this fatal officer.

Meanwhile, Oliver, after he had prowled around the room in the stealthy manner which we have endeavoured to describe,—all, even the highest officers, making way for him, and loading him with their ceremonious attentions, which his modesty seemed desirous to avoid,—again entered the inner apartment, the doors of which were presently thrown open, and King Louis entered the presence-chamber.

Quentin, like all others, turned his eyes upon him; and started so suddenly, that he almost dropped his weapon, when he recognized in the King

of France that silk-merchant, Maitre Pierre, who had been the companion of his morning walk. Singular suspicions respecting the real rank of this person had at different times crossed his thoughts; but this, the proved reality, was wilder than his wildest conjecture.

The stern look of his uncle, offended at this breach of the decorum of his office, recalled him to himself; but not a little was he astonished when the King, whose quick eye had at once discovered him, walked straight to the place where he was posted, without taking notice of any one else.— "So," he said, "young man, I am told you have been brawling on your first arrival in Touraine; but I pardon you, as it was chiefly the fault of a foolish old merchant, who thought your Caledonian blood required to be heated in the morning with *Vin de Beaulne.* If I can find him, I will make him an example to those who debauch my Guards. —Balafré," he added, speaking to Lesly, "your kinsman is a fair youth, though a fiery. We love to cherish such spirits, and mean to make more than ever we did of the brave men who are around us. Let the year, day, hour, and minute of his birth be written down, and given to Oliver Dain."

Balafré bowed to the ground, and re-assumed his erect military position, as one who would shew by his demeanour his promptitude to act in the King's quarrel or defence. Quentin, in the meantime,

recovered from his first surprise, studied the King's appearance more attentively, and was surprised to find how differently he construed his deportment and features.

These were not much changed in exterior, for Louis, always a scorner of outward show, wore, on the present occasion, an old dark-blue hunting-dress, not much better than the plain burgher suit of the preceding day, and garnished with a huge rosary of ebony, which had been sent to him by no less a personage than the Grand Seignior, with an attestation that it had been used by a Coptic hermit on Mount Lebanon, a personage of profound sanctity. And for his cap with a single image, he now wore a hat, the band of which was garnished with at least a dozen of little paltry figures of saints stamped in lead. But those eyes, which, according to Quentin's former impression, only twinkled with the love of gain, had, now that they were known to be the property of an able and powerful monarch, a piercing and majestic glance; and those wrinkles on the brow, which he had supposed were formed during a long series of petty schemes of commerce, seemed now the furrows which sagacity had worn while toiling in meditation upon the fate of nations.

Presently after the King's appearance, the Princesses of France, with the ladies of their suite, entered the apartment. With the eldest, afterwards

married to Peter of Bourbon, and known in French history by the name of the Lady of Beaujeau, our story has but little to do. She was tall, and rather handsome, possessed eloquence, talent, and much of her father's sagacity, who reposed much confidence in her, and loved her as much perhaps as he loved any one.

The younger sister, the unfortunate Joan, the destined bride of the Duke of Orleans, advanced timidly by the side of her sister, conscious of a total want of those external qualities which women are most desirous of possessing, or being thought to possess. She was pale, thin, and sickly in her complexion, her shape visibly bent to one side, and her gait so unequal that she might be called lame. A fine set of teeth, and eyes which were expressive of melancholy, softness, and resignation, with a quantity of light brown locks, were the only redeeming points which flattery itself could have dared to number, to counteract the general homeliness of her face and figure. To complete the picture, it was easy to remark, from the Princess's negligence in dress, and the timidity of her manner, that she had an unusual and distressing consciousness of her own plainness of appearance, and did not dare to make any of those attempts to mend by manners or by art what nature had left amiss, or in any other way to exert a power of pleasing. The King (who loved her not) stepped

hastily to her as she entered.—" How now!" he said, " our world-contemning daughter—Are you robed for a hunting-party, or for the convent, this morning? Speak—answer."

" For which your highness pleases, sire," said the Princess, scarce raising her voice above her breath.

" Ay, doubtless, you would persuade me it is your desire to quit the Court, Joan, and renounce the world and its vanities.—Ha! maiden, would'st thou have it thought that we, the first-born of Holy Church, would refuse our daughter to Heaven?—Our Lady and Saint Martin forbid we should refuse the offering, were it worthy of the altar, or were thy vocation in truth thitherward!"

So saying, the King crossed himself devoutly, looking, in the meantime, as appeared to Quentin, very like a cunning vassal, who was depreciating the merit of something which he was desirous to keep to himself, in order that he might stand excused for not offering it to his chief or superior. " Dares he thus play the hypocrite with Heaven," thought Durward, " and sport with God and the Saints, as he may safely do with men, who dare not search his nature too closely?"

Louis meantime resumed, after a moment's mental devotion—" No, fair daughter, I and another know your real mind better—Ha! fair cousin of Orleans, do we not? Approach, fair sir, and lead this devoted vestal of ours to her horse."

Orleans started when the King spoke, and hastened to obey him; but with such precipitation of step, and confusion, that Louis called out, "Nay, cousin, rein your gallantry, and look before you.—Why, what a headlong matter a gallant's haste is on some occasions!—You had well nigh taken Anne's hand instead of her sister's.—Sir, must I give Joan's to you myself?"

The unhappy Prince looked up, and shuddered like a child, when forced to touch something at which it has instinctive horror—then making an effort, took the hand which the Princess neither gave nor yet withheld. As they stood, her cold damp fingers enclosed in his trembling hand, with their eyes looking on the ground, it would have been difficult to say which of these two youthful beings was rendered more utterly miserable—the Duke, who felt himself fettered to the object of his aversion by bonds which he durst not tear asunder, or the unfortunate young woman, who too plainly saw that she was an object of abhorrence to him, to gain whose kindness she would willingly have died.

"And now to horse, gentlemen and ladies—We will ourselves lead forth our daughter of Beaujeau," said the King; "and God's blessing and Saint Hubert's be on our morning sport."

"I am, I fear, doomed to interrupt it, sire," said the Compte de Dunois—"The Burgundian

Envoy is before the gates of the Castle, and demands an audience."

"*Demands* an audience, Dunois?" replied the King—"Did you not answer him, as we sent you word by Oliver, that we were not at leisure to see him to-day,—and that to-morrow was the festival of Saint Martin, which, please Heaven, we would disturb by no earthly thoughts,—and that on the succeeding day we were designed for Amboise—but that we would not fail to appoint him as early an audience, when we returned, as our pressing affairs would permit?"

"All this I said," answered Dunois; "but yet, sire——"

"*Pasques-dieu!* man, what is it that thus sticks in thy throat?" said the King. "This Burgundian's terms must have been hard of digestion."

"Had not my duty, your Grace's commands, and his character as an Envoy restrained me," said Dunois, "he should have tried to digest them himself; for, by our Lady of Orleans, I had more mind to have made him eat his own words, than to have brought them to your Majesty."

"Body of me, Dunois," said the King, "it is strange that thou, one of the most impatient fellows alive, should'st have so little sympathy with the like infirmity in our blunt and fiery cousin, Charles of Burgundy.—Why, man, I mind his blustering messages no more than the towers of

this Castle regard the whistling of the north-east wind, which comes from Flanders, as well as this brawling Envoy."

"Know then, sire," replied Dunois, "that the Count of Crevecœur tarries below, with his retinue of pursuivants and trumpets, and says, that, since your Majesty refuses him the audience which his master has instructed him to demand, upon matters of most pressing concern, he will remain there till midnight, and accost your Majesty at whatever hour you are pleased to issue from your Castle, whether for business, exercise, or devotion; and that no consideration, except the use of absolute force, shall compel him to desist from this resolution."

"He is a fool," said the King, with much composure. "Does the hot-headed Hainaulter think it any penance for a man of sense to remain for twenty-four hours quiet within the walls of his Castle, when he hath the affairs of a kingdom to occupy him? These impatient coxcombs think that all men, like themselves, are miserable, save when in saddle and stirrup. Let the dogs be put up, and well looked to, gentle Dunois—We will hold council to-day, instead of hunting."

"My Liege," answered Dunois, "you will not thus rid yourself of Crevecœur; for his master's instructions are, that if he hath not this audience which he demands, he shall nail his gauntlet to the

palisades before the Castle, in token of mortal defiance on the part of his master, shall renounce the Duke's fealty to France, and declare instant war."

"Ay," said Louis, without any perceptible alteration of voice, but frowning until his piercing dark eyes became almost invisible under his shaggy eye-brows, "is it even so?—will our ancient vassal prove so masterful—our dear cousin treat us thus unkindly?—Nay then, Dunois, we must unfold the *Oriflamme*, and cry *Dennis Montjoye!*"

"Marry and amen, and in a most happy hour!" said the martial Dunois; and the guards in the hall, unable to resist the same impulse, stirred each upon his post, so as to produce a low but distinct sound of clashing arms. The King cast his eye proudly round, and, for a moment, thought and looked like his heroic father.

But the excitement of the moment presently gave way to the host of political considerations, which, at that conjuncture, rendered an open breach with Burgundy so peculiarly perilous. Edward IV., a brave and victorious king, who had in his own person fought thirty battles, was now established on the throne of England, was brother to the Duchess of Burgundy, and, it might well be supposed, waited but a rupture between his near connection and Louis, to carry into France, through the ever-open gate of Calais, those arms which had been triumphant in the civil wars, and to obliterate the recollection of civil dissensions by that most

popular of all occupations amongst the English, an invasion of France. To this consideration was added the uncertain faith of the Duke of Bretagne, and other weighty subjects of reflection. So that, after a deep pause, when Louis again spoke, although in the same tone, it was with an altered spirit. "But God forbid," he said, "that aught less than necessity should make us, the Most Christian King, give cause to the effusion of Christian blood, if anything short of dishonour may avert such a calamity. We tender our subjects' safety dearer than the ruffle which our own dignity may receive from the rude breath of a malapert ambassador, who hath perhaps exceeded the errand with which he was charged.—Admit the Envoy of Burgundy to our presence."

"*Beati pacifici*, said the Cardinal Balue.

"True; and your eminence knoweth that they who humble themselves shall be exalted," added the King.

The Cardinal spoke an Amen, to which few assented; for even the pale cheek of Orleans kindled with shame, and Balafré suppressed his feelings so little, as to let the butt-end of his partizan fall heavily on the floor,—a movement of impatience for which he underwent a bitter reproof from the Cardinal, with a lecture on the mode of handling his arms when in presence of the Sovereign. The King himself seemed unusually embarrassed at the silence around him. "You are pensive, Dunois,"

he said—" You disapprove of our giving way to this hot-headed Envoy."

" By no means," said Dunois ; " I meddle not with matters beyond my sphere. I was but thinking of asking a boon of your Majesty."

" A boon, Dunois—what is it ?—You are an unfrequent suitor, and may count on our favour."

" I would, then, your Majesty would send me to Evreux to regulate the clergy," said Dunois, with military frankness.

" That were indeed beyond thy sphere," replied the King, smiling.

" I might order priests as well," replied the Count, " as my Lord Bishop of Evreux, or my Lord Cardinal, if he likes the title better, can exercise the soldiers of your Majesty's guard."

The King smiled again, and more mysteriously, while he whispered Dunois, " The time may come when you and I will regulate the priests together —But this is for the present a good conceited animal of a Bishop. Ah, Dunois !—Rome, Rome puts him and other burthens upon us—But patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards, till our hand is a stronger one."*

* Dr Dryasdust here remarks, that cards, said to have been invented in a preceding reign, for the amusement of Charles V. during the intervals of his mental disorder, seem speedily to have become common among the courtiers, since they already furnished Louis XI. with a metaphor. The same proverb was quoted by Durandarte, in the enchanted cave of Montesinos.

The flourish of the trumpets in the court-yard now announced the arrival of the Burgundian nobleman. All in the presence-chamber made haste to arrange themselves according to their proper places of precedence, the King and his daughters remaining in the centre of the assembly.

The Count of Crevecœur, a renowned and undaunted warrior, entered the apartment; and, contrary to the usage among the envoys of friendly powers, he appeared all armed, excepting his head, in a gorgeous suit of the most superb Milan armour, made of steel, inlaid and embossed with gold, which was wrought into the fantastic taste called the Arabesque. Around his neck, and over his polished cuirass, hung his master's order of the Golden Fleece, one of the most honoured associations of chivalry then known in Christendom. A handsome page bore his helmet behind him, a herald preceded him, bearing his letters of credence, which he offered on his knee to the King; while the ambassador himself paused in the midst of the hall, as if to give present time to admire his lofty look, commanding stature, and undaunted composure of countenance and manner. The rest of his attendants waited in the anti-chamber, or court-yard.

"Approach, Seignior Count de Crevecœur," said Louis, after a moment's glance at his commission; "we need not our Cousin's letters of credence, ei-

ther to introduce to us a warrior so well known, or to assure us of your highly deserved credit with your master. We trust that your fair partner, who shares some of our ancestral blood, is in good health. Had you brought her in your hand, Seignior Count, we might have thought you wore your armour, on this unwonted occasion, to maintain the superiority of her charms against the amorous chivalry of France. As it is, we cannot guess the reason of this complete panoply."

"Sire," replied the ambassador, "the Count of Crevecœur must lament his misfortune, and entreat your forgiveness, that he cannot, on this occasion, reply with such humble deference as is due to the royal courtesy with which your Majesty has honoured him. But, although it is only the voice of Philip Crevecœur de Cordès which speaks, the words which he utters must be those of his gracious Lord and Sovereign the Duke of Burgundy."

"And what has Crevecœur to say in the words of Burgundy?" said Louis, with an assumption of sufficient dignity. "Yet hold—remember, that in this presence, Philip Crevecœur de Cordès speaks to him whom he calls his Sovereign's Sovereign."

Crevecœur bowed, and then spoke aloud:—"King of France, the mighty Duke of Burgundy once more sends you a written schedule of the wrongs and oppressions committed on his frontiers by your Majesty's garrisons and officers; and the first point

of inquiry is, whether it is your Majesty's purpose to make him amends for these injuries?"

The King, looking slightly at the memorial which the herald delivered to him upon his knee, said, "These matters have been already long before our Council. Of the injuries complained of, some are in requital of those sustained by my subjects, some are affirmed without any proof, some have been retaliated by the Duke's garrisons and soldiers; and if there remain any which fall under none of those predicaments, we are not, as a Christian prince, averse to make satisfaction for wrongs actually sustained by our neighbour, though committed not only without our countenance, but against our express order."

"I will convey your Majesty's answer," said the ambassador, "to my most gracious master; yet, let me say, that, as it is in no degree different from the evasive replies which have already been returned to his just complaints, I cannot hope that it will afford the means of re-establishing peace and friendship betwixt France and Burgundy."

"Be that at God's pleasure," said the King. "It is not for dread of thy Master's arms, but for the sake of peace only, that I return so temperate an answer to his injurious reproaches. Proceed with thine errand."

"My Master's next demand," said the Ambassador, "is, that your Majesty will cease your secret

and underhand dealings with his towns of Ghent, Liege, and Malines. He requests that your Majesty will recal the secret agents, by whose means the discontents of his good citizens of Flanders are inflamed; and dismiss from your Majesty's dominions, or rather deliver up to the condign punishment of their liege lord, those traitorous fugitives, who, having fled from the scene of their machinations, have found too ready a refuge in Paris, Orleans, Tours, and other French cities."

"Say to the Duke of Burgundy," replied the King, "that I know of no such indirect practices as those with which he injuriously charges me; that my subjects of France have frequent intercourse with the good cities of Flanders, for the purpose of mutual benefit by free traffic, which it would be as much contrary to the Duke's interest as mine to interrupt; and that many Flemings have residence in my kingdom, and enjoy the protection of my laws, for the same purpose; but none, to our knowledge, for those of treason or mutiny against the Duke. Proceed with your message—you have heard my answer."

"As formerly, Sire, with pain," replied the Count of Crevecœur; "it not being of that direct or explicit nature which the Duke, my master, will accept, in atonement for a long train of secret machinations, not the less certain, though now disavowed by your Majesty. But I proceed with my

message. The Duke of Burgundy further requires the King of France to send back to his dominions without delay, and under a secure safe-guard, the persons of Isabelle Countess of Croye, and of her relation and guardian the Countess Hameline, of the same family, in respect the said Countess Isabelle, being, by the law of the country, and the feudal tenure of her estates, the ward of the said Duke of Burgundy, hath fled from his dominions, and from the charge which he, as a careful Prince, was willing to extend over her, and is here maintained in secret by the King of France, and by him fortified in her contumacy to the Duke, her natural lord and guardian, contrary to the laws of God and man, as they ever have been acknowledged in civilized Europe.—Once more I pause for your Majesty's reply."

"You did well, Count de Crevecœur," said Louis, scornfully, "to begin your embassy at an early hour; for, if it be your purpose to call on me to account for the flight of every vassal whom your master's heady passion may have driven from his dominions, the bead-roll may last till sun-set. Who can affirm that these ladies are in my dominions? who can presume to say, if it be so, that I have either countenanced their flight hither, or have received them with offers of protection?"

"Sire," said Crevecœur, "may it please your Majesty, I *was* provided with a witness on this

subject—one who beheld these fugitive ladies in the inn called the Fleur-de-Lys, not far from this Castle—one who saw your Majesty in their company, though under the unworthy disguise of a burgess of Tours—one who received from them, in your royal presence, messages and letters to their friends in Flanders—all which he conveyed to the hand and ear of the Duke of Burgundy."

"Bring him forward," said the King; "place the man before my face who dares maintain these palpable falsehoods."

"You speak in triumph, my lord; for you are well aware that this witness exists no longer. When he lived, he was called Zamet Magraubin, by birth one of those Bohemian wanderers. He was yesterday, as I have learned, executed by a party of your Majesty's Provost-Marshal, to prevent, doubtless, his standing here, to verify what he said of this matter to the Duke of Burgundy, in presence of his Council, and of me, Philip Crevecœur de Cordès."

"Now, by our Lady of Embrun!" said the King, "so gross are these accusations, and so free of consciousness am I of aught that approaches them, that, by the honour of a King, I laugh, rather than am wroth at them. My Provost-guard put to death, as is their duty, thieves and vagabonds; and my crown is to be slandered with whatsoever these thieves and vagabonds may have said to our hot cousin of Burgundy and his wise counsellors! I

pray you, tell my kind cousin, if he loves such companions, he had best keep them in his own estates; for here they are like to meet short shrift and a tight cord."

"My master needs no such subjects, Sir King," answered the Count, in a tone more disrespectful than he had yet permitted himself to make use of; "for the noble Duke uses not to inquire of witches, wandering Egyptians, or others, upon the destiny and fate of his neighbours and allies."

"We have had patience enough, and to spare," said the King, interrupting him; "and since thy sole errand here seems to be for the purpose of insult, we will send some one in our name to the Duke of Burgundy—convinced, in thus demeaning thyself towards us, thou hast exceeded thy commission, whatever that may have been."

"On the contrary," said Crevecœur, "I have not yet acquitted myself of it. Hearken, Louis of Valois, King of France—Hearken, nobles and gentlemen, who may be present—Hearken, all good and true men—And thou, Toison d'Or," addressing the herald, "make proclamation after me.—I, Philip Crevecœur of Cordes, Count of the Empire, and Knight of the honourable and princely Order of the Golden Fleece, in the name of the most puissant Lord and Prince, Charles, by the Grace of God, Duke of Burgundy and Lothairingia, of Brabant and Limbourg, of Luxembourg and of

Gueldres; Earl of Flanders and of Artois; Count Palatine of Hainault, of Holland, Zealand, Namur, and Zutphen; Marquis of the Holy Empire; Lord of Friezeland, Salines, and Malines, do give you, Louis, King of France, openly to know, that you having refused to remedy the various griefs, wrongs, and offences, done and wrought by you, or by and through your aid, suggestion, and instigation, against the said Duke and his loving subjects, he, by my mouth, renounces all allegiance and fealty towards your crown and dignity—pronounces you false and faithless; and defies you as a Prince, and as a man. There lies my gage, in evidence of what I have said."

So saying, he plucked the gauntlet off his right hand, and flung it down on the floor of the hall.

Until this last climax of audacity, there had been a deep silence in the royal apartment during the extraordinary scene; but no sooner had the clash of the gauntlet, when cast down, been echoed by the deep voice of Toison d'Or, the Burgundian herald, with the ejaculation, "Vive Bourgogne!" than there was a general tumult. While Dunois, Orleans, old Lord Crawford, and one or two others, whose rank authorized their interference, contended which should lift up the gauntlet, the others in the hall exclaimed, "Strike him down! Cut him to pieces! Comes he here to insult the King of France in his own palace!"

But the King appeased the tumult by exclaiming, in a voice like thunder, which overawed and silenced every other sound, "Silence, my lieges! lay not a hand on the man, not a finger on the gage! —And you, Sir Count, of what is your life composed, or how is it warranted, that you thus place it on the cast of a die so perilous? Or is your Duke made of a different metal from other princes, since he thus asserts his pretended quarrel in a manner so unusual?"

"He is indeed framed of a different and more noble metal than the other princes of Europe," said the undaunted Count of Crevecœur; "for, when not one of them dared to give shelter to you—to *you*, I say, King Louis—when you were an exile from France, and pursued by the whole bitterness of your father's revenge, and all the power of his kingdom, you were received and protected like a brother by my noble master, whose generosity of disposition you have so grossly misused. Farewell, Sire, my mission is discharged."

So saying, the Count de Crevecœur left the apartment abruptly, and without further leave-taking.

"After him—after him—take up the gauntlet and after him!" said the King. "—I mean not you, Dunois, nor you, my Lord of Crawford, who, methinks, may be too old for such hot frays; nor you, Cousin of Orleans, who are too young for them.

—My Lord Cardinal—my Lord Bishop of Auxerre—it is your holy office to make peace among princes;—do you lift the gauntlet, and remonstrate with Count Crevecœur on the sin he has committed, in thus insulting a great Monarch in his own Court, and forcing us to bring the miseries of war upon his kingdom and that of his neighbour."

Upon this direct personal appeal, the Cardinal Balue proceeded to lift the gauntlet, with such precaution as one would touch an adder,—so great was apparently his aversion to this symbol of war, —and presently left the royal apartment to hasten after the challenger.

Louis paused and looked round the circle of his courtiers, most of whom, except such as we have already distinguished, being men of low birth, and raised to their rank in the King's household for other gifts than courage or feats of arms, looked pale on each other, and had obviously received an unpleasant impression from the scene which had been just acted. Louis gazed on them with contempt, and then said aloud, "Although the Count of Crevecœur be presumptuous and overweening, it must be confessed that in him the Duke of Burgundy hath as bold a servant as ever bore message for a prince. I would I knew where to find as faithful an Envoy to carry back my answer."

"You do your French nobles injustice, Sire,"

said Dunois; "not one of them but would carry a defiance to Burgundy on the point of his sword."

"And, Sire," said old Crawford, "you wrong also the Scottish gentlemen who serve you. I, or any of my followers, being of meet rank, would not hesitate a moment to call yonder proud Count to a reckoning; my own arm is yet strong enough for the purpose, if I have but your Majesty's permission."

"But your Majesty," continued Dunois, "will employ us in no service through which we may win honour to ourselves, to your Majesty, or to France."

"Say rather," said the King, "that I will not give way, Dunois, to the headlong impetuosity, which, on some knight-errant punctilio, would wreck yourselves, the throne, France, and all. There is not one of you who knows not how precious every hour of peace is at this moment, when so necessary to heal the wounds of a distracted country; yet there is not one of you who would not rush into war on account of the tale of a wandering gipsy, or of some errant demosel, whose reputation, perhaps, is scarce higher.—Here comes the Cardinal, and we trust with more pacific tidings.—How now, my Lord—have you brought the Count to reason and to temper?"

"Sire," said Balue, "my task hath been difficult. I put it to yonder proud Count, how he dared to use towards your Majesty, the presump-

tuous reproach with which his audience had broken up, and which must be understood as proceeding, not from his master, but from his own insolence, and as placing him therefore in your Majesty's discretion, for what penalty you might think proper."

"You said right," replied the King; "and what was his answer?"

"The Count," continued the Cardinal, "had at that moment his foot in the stirrup, ready to mount; and, on hearing my expostulation, he turned his head without altering his position. 'Had I,' said he, 'been fifty leagues distant, and had heard by report that a question vituperative of my Prince had been asked by the King of France, I had, even at that distance, instantly mounted, and returned to disburthen my mind of the answer which I gave him but now.'"

"I said, sirs," said the King, turning around, without any show of angry emotion, "that in the Count Philip of Crevecœur, our cousin the Duke possesses as worthy a servant as ever rode at a prince's right hand.—But you prevailed with him to stay?"

"To stay for twenty-four hours; and in the meanwhile to receive again his gage of defiance," said the Cardinal: "he has dismounted at the Fleur-de-Lys."

"See that he be nobly attended and cared for,

at our charges," said the King; "such a servant is a jewel in a prince's crown.—Twenty-four hours?" he added, muttering to himself, and looking as if he were stretching his eyes to see into futurity; "twenty-four hours?—'tis of the shortest. Yet twenty-four hours, ably and skilfully employed, may be worth a year in the hand of indolent or incapable agents.—Well.—To the forest—to the forest, my gallant lords!—Orleans, my fair kinsman, lay aside that modesty, though it becomes you; mind not my Joan's coyness. The Loire may as soon avoid mingling with the Cher, as she from favouring your suit, or you from preferring it," he added, as the unhappy prince moved slowly on after his betrothed bride. "And now for your boar-spears, gentlemen; for Allegre, my pricker, hath harboured one that will try both dog and man.—Dunois, lend me your spear,—take mine, it is too weighty for me; but when did *you* complain of such a fault in your lance?—To horse—to horse, gentlemen."

And all the chase rode on.

CHAP. IX.

THE BOAR-HUNT.

I will converse with unrespective boys
And iron-witted fools. None are for me
That look into me with suspicious eyes.
King Richard.

ALL the experience which the Cardinal had been able to collect of his master's disposition, did not, upon the present occasion, prevent his falling into a great error of policy. His vanity induced him to think that he had been more successful in prevailing upon the Count of Crevecœur to remain at Tours, than any other moderator whom the King might have employed, would, in all probability, have been. And as he was well aware of the importance which Louis attached to the postponement of a war with the Duke of Burgundy, he could not help shewing that he conceived himself to have rendered the King great and acceptable service. He pressed nearer to the King's person than he was wont to do, and endeavoured to engage him in conversation on the events of the morning.

This was injudicious in more respects than one; for princes love not to see their subjects approach them with an air conscious of deserving, and thereby seeming desirous to extort acknowledgment and recompence of their services; and Louis, the most jealous monarch that ever lived, was peculiarly averse and inaccessible to any one who seemed either to presume upon service rendered, or to pry into his secrets.

Yet, hurried away, as the most cautious sometimes are, by the self-satisfied humour of the moment, the Cardinal continued to ride on the King's right hand, turning the discourse, whenever it was possible, upon Crevecœur and his embassy; which, although it might be the matter at that moment most in the King's thoughts, was nevertheless precisely that which he was least willing to converse on. At length Louis, who had listened to him with attention, yet without having returned any answer which could tend to prolong the conversation, signed to Dunois, who rode at no great distance, to come up on the other side of his horse.

"We came hither for sport and exercise," said he, "but the reverend Father here would have us hold a council of state."

"I hope your Highness will excuse my assistance," said Dunois; "I am born to fight the battles of France, and have heart and hand for that, but I have no head for her councils."

"My Lord Cardinal hath a head turned for nothing else, Dunois; he hath confessed Crevecœur at the Castle-gate, and he hath communicated to us his whole shrift—Said you not the *whole*?" he continued, with an emphasis on the word, and a glance at the Cardinal, which shot from betwixt his long dark eye-lashes, as a dagger gleams when it leaves the scabbard.

The Cardinal trembled, as, endeavouring to reply to the King's jest, he said, "That though his order was obliged to conceal the secrets of their penitents in general, there was no *sigillum confessionis*, which could not be melted at his Majesty's breath."

"And as his Eminence," said the King, "is ready to communicate the secrets of others to us, he naturally expects that we should be equally communicative to him; and, in order to get upon this reciprocal footing, he is very reasonably desirous to know if these two ladies of Croye be actually in our territories. We are sorry we cannot indulge his curiosity, not ourselves knowing in what precise place errant damsels, disguised princesses, distressed countesses, may lie leaguer within our dominions, which are, we thank God and our Lady of Embrun, rather too extensive, for us to answer easily his Eminence's most reasonable inquiries.—But supposing they were with us, what say you, Dunois, to our cousin's peremptory demand?"

"I will answer you, my Lord, if you will tell me in sincerity, whether you want war or peace," replied Dunois, with a frankness which, while it arose out of his own native openness and intrepidity of character, made him from time to time a considerable favourite with Louis, who, like all astucious persons, was as desirous of looking into the hearts of others as of concealing his own.

"By my halidome," said he, "I should be as well contented as thyself, Dunois, to tell thee my purpose, did I myself but know it exactly. But say I declared for war, what should I do with this beautiful and wealthy young heiress, supposing her to be in my dominions?"

"Bestow her in marriage on one of your own gallant followers, who has a heart to love and an arm to protect her," said Dunois.

"Upon thyself, ha!" said the King. "*Pasques-dieu!* thou art more politic than I took thee for, with all thy bluntness."

"Nay, Sire, I am aught except politic. By our Lady of Orleans, I come to the point at once, as I ride my horse at the ring. Your Majesty owes the house of Orleans at least one happy marriage."

"And I will pay it, Count. *Pasques-dieu*, I will pay it!—See you not yonder fair couple?"

The King pointed to the unhappy Duke of Orleans and the Princess, who, neither daring to remain at a greater distance from the King, nor in

his sight appear separate from each other, were riding side by side, yet with an interval of two or three yards betwixt them, a space which timidity on the one side, and aversion on the other, prevented them from diminishing, while neither dared to increase it.

Dunois looked in the direction of the King's signal, and as the situation of his unfortunate relative and the destined bride reminded him of nothing so much as of two dogs, which, forcibly linked together, remain nevertheless as widely separated as the length of their collars will permit, he could not help shaking his head, though he ventured not on any other reply to the hypocritical tyrant. Louis seemed to guess his thoughts.

"It will be a peaceful and quiet household they will keep—not much disturbed with children, I should augur. But these are not always a blessing."

It was, perhaps, the recollection of his own filial ingratitude that made the King pause as he made the last reflection, and which converted the sneer which trembled on his lip into something resembling an expression of contrition. But he instantly proceeded in another tone.

"Frankly, my Dunois, much as I revere the holy sacrament of matrimony (here he crossed himself), I would rather the house of Orleans raised for me such gallant soldiers as thy father and thyself, who share the blood-royal of France without claiming

its rights, than that the country should be rent to pieces, as England, by wars by the rivalry of legitimate candidates for the crown. The lion should never have more than one cub."

Dunois sighed and was silent, conscious that contradicting his arbitrary Sovereign might well hurt his kinsman's interests, but could do him no service; yet he could not forbear adding, in the next moment,

"Since your Majesty has alluded to the birth of my father, I must needs own, that, setting the frailty of his parents on one side, he might be termed happier, and more fortunate, as the son of lawless love, than of conjugal hatred."

"Thou art a scandalous fellow, Dunois, to speak thus of holy wedlock. But to the devil with the discourse, for the boar is unharboured.—Lay on the dogs, in the name of the holy Saint Hubert! —Ha! ha! tra-la-la-lira-la!"—And the King's horn rung merrily through the woods as he pushed forward on the chase, followed by two or three of his guards, amongst whom was our friend Quentin Durward. And here it was remarkable, that, even in the keen prosecution of his favourite sport, the King, in indulgence of his caustic disposition, found leisure to amuse himself by tormenting Cardinal Balue.

It was one of that able statesman's weaknesses, as we have elsewhere hinted, to suppose himself,

though of low rank and limited education, qualified to play the courtier and the man of gallantry. He did not, indeed, actually enter the lists like Becket, or levy soldiers like Wolsey. But gallantry, in which they also were proficients, was his professed pursuit; and he likewise affected great fondness for the martial amusement of the chase. But, however well he might succeed with certain ladies, to whom his power, his wealth, and his influence as a statesman, might atone for deficiencies in appearance and manners, the gallant horses, which he purchased at almost any price, were totally insensible to the dignity of carrying a Cardinal, and paid no more respect to him than they would have done to his father the tailor, whom he rivalled in horsemanship. The King knew this, and, by alternately exciting and checking his own horse, he brought that of the Cardinal, whom he kept close by his side, into such a state of mutiny against his rider, that it became apparent they must soon part company; and then, in the midst of its starting, bolting, rearing, and lashing out, alternately, the royal tormentor rendered the rider miserable, by questioning him upon many affairs of importance, and hinting his purpose to take that opportunity of communicating to him some of those secrets of state, which the Cardinal had but a little while before seemed so anxious to learn.

A more awkward situation could hardly be ima-

gined, than that of a privy-councillor forced to listen to and reply to his Sovereign, while each fresh gambade of his unmanageable horse placed him in a new and more precarious attitude—his violet robe flying loose in every direction, and nothing securing him from an instant and perilous fall, save the depth of the saddle, and its height before and behind. Dunois laughed without restraint; while the King, who had a private mode of enjoying his jest inwardly, without laughing aloud, mildly rebuked his minister on his eager passion for the chase, which would not permit him to dedicate a few moments to business. "I will no longer be your hinderance," continued he, addressing the terrified Cardinal, and giving his own horse the rein at the same time.

Before Balue could utter a word by way of answer or apology, his horse, seizing the bit with his teeth, went forth at an uncontrollable gallop, soon leaving behind the King and Dunois, who followed at a more regulated pace, enjoying the statesman's distressed predicament. If any of our readers has chanced to be run away with in his time, (as we ourselves have in ours,) he will have a full sense at once of the pain, peril, and absurdity of the situation. These four legs of the quadruped, which, noway under the rider's control, nor sometimes under that of the creature they more properly belong to, fly at such a rate as if the hindermost meant to overtake the foremost—those clinging legs

of the biped which we so often wish safely planted on the green sward, but which now only augment our distress by pressing the animal's sides—the hands which have forsaken the bridle for the mane —the body which, instead of sitting upright on the centre of gravity, as old Angelo used to recommend, or stooping forward like a jockey at Newmarket, lies, rather than hangs, crouched upon the back of the animal, with no better chance of saving itself than a sack of corn,—combine to make a picture more than sufficiently ludicrous to spectators, however uncomfortable to the exhibiter. But add to this some singularity of dress or appearance on the part of the unhappy cavalier—a robe of office, a splendid uniform, or any other peculiarity of costume,—and let the scene of action be a race-course, a review, a procession, or any other place of concourse and public display, and if the poor wight would escape being the object of a shout of inextinguishable laughter, he must contrive to break a limb or two, or, which will be more effectual, to be killed on the spot; for on no slighter condition will his fall excite anything like serious sympathy. On the present occasion, the short violet-coloured gown of the Cardinal, which he used as a riding-dress, (having changed his long robes before he left the Castle,) his scarlet stockings, and scarlet hat, with the long strings hanging down, together with his

utter helplessness, gave infinite zest to his exhibition of horsemanship.

The horse, having taken matters entirely into his own hand, flew rather than galloped up a long green avenue, overtook the pack in hard pursuit of the boar, and then, having overturned one or two yeoman prickers, who little expected to be charged in the rear,—having ridden down several dogs, and greatly confused the chase,—animated by the clamours and threats of the huntsman, carried the terrified Cardinal past the formidable animal itself, which was rushing on at a speedy trot, furious and embossed with the foam which he churned around his tusks. Balue, on beholding himself so near the boar, set up a dreadful cry for help, which, or perhaps the sight of the boar, produced such an effect on his horse, that the animal interrupted its headlong career by suddenly springing to one side; so that the Cardinal, who had long only kept his seat because the motion was straight forward, now fell heavily to the ground. The conclusion of Balue's chase took place so near the boar, that, had not the animal been at that moment too much engaged about his own affairs, the vicinity might have proved as fatal to the Cardinal, as it is said to have done to Favila, King of the Visigoths, in Spain. He got off, however, for the fright, and crawled as hastily as he could out of the way of hounds and huntsmen, saw the whole chase sweep

by him without affording him assistance; for hunters in those days were as little moved by sympathy for such misfortunes as they are in our own.

The King, as he passed, said to Dunois, "Yonder lies his Eminence low enough—he is no great huntsman, though for a fisher (when a secret is to be caught,) he may match Saint Peter himself. He has, however, for once, I think, met with his match."

The Cardinal did not hear the words, but the scornful look with which they were spoken led him to suspect their general import. The devil is said to seize such opportunities of temptation as was now afforded by the passions of Balue, bitterly moved as they had been by the scorn of the King. The momentary fright was over so soon as he had assured himself that his fall was harmless; but mortified vanity, and resentment against his Sovereign, had a much longer influence on his feelings.

After all the chase had passed him, a single cavalier, who seemed rather to be a spectator than a partaker of the sport, rode up with one or two attendants, and expressed no small surprise to find the Cardinal there upon foot, without a horse or attendants, and in such a plight as plainly shewed the nature of the accident which had there placed him. To dismount, and offer his assistance in this predicament,—to cause one of his attendants resign a staid and quiet palfrey for the Cardinal's use—

to express his surprise at the customs of the French Court, which thus permitted them to abandon to the dangers of the chase, and forsake in his need, their wisest statesman, were the natural modes of assistance and consolation which so strange a rencontre supplied to Crevecœur; for it was the Burgundian ambassador who came to the assistance of the fallen Cardinal.

He found him in a lucky time and humour for essaying some of those practices on his fidelity, to which it is well known that Balue had the criminal weakness to listen. Already in the morning, as the jealous temper of Louis had suggested, more had passed betwixt them than the Cardinal durst have reported to his master. But although he had listened with gratified ears to the high value, which, he was assured by Crevecœur, the Duke of Burgundy placed upon his person and talents, and not without a feeling of temptation, when the Count hinted at the munificence of his master's disposition, and the rich benefices of Flanders, it was not until the accident, as we have related, had highly irritated him, that, stung with wounded vanity, he resolved, in a fatal hour, to shew, that no enemy can be so dangerous as an offended friend and confidant.

On the present occasion, he hastily requested Crevecœur to separate from him, lest they should be observed, but appointed him a meeting for the

evening in the Abbey of Saint Martin's at Tours, after vesper service; and that in a tone which assured the Burgundian that his master had obtained an advantage hardly to have been hoped for.

In the meanwhile, Louis, who, though the most politic Prince of his time, upon this, as on other occasions, suffered his passions to interfere with his art, followed contentedly the chase of the wild boar, which was now come to an interesting point. It had so happened that a sounder (*i. e.* in the language of the period, a boar of only two years old) had crossed the track of the proper object of the chase, and withdrawn in pursuit of him all the dogs, (saving two or three couple of old staunch hounds,) and the greater part of the huntsmen. The King saw, with internal glee, Dunois, as well as others, follow upon this false scent, and enjoyed in secret the thought of triumphing over that accomplished knight, in the art of venerie, which was then thought almost as glorious as war. Louis was well mounted, and followed close on the hounds; so that, when the boar turned to bay in a marshy piece of ground, there was no one near him but the King himself.

Louis shewed all the bravery and expertness of an experienced huntsman; for, unheeding the danger, he rode up to the tremendous animal, which was defending itself with fury against the dogs, and struck him with his boar-spear; yet, as the horse

shyed from the boar, the blow was not so effectual as either to kill or disable him. No effort could prevail on the horse to charge a second time; so that the King, dismounting, advanced on foot against the furious animal, holding naked in his hand one of those short, sharp, straight, and pointed swords, which huntsmen used for such encounters. The boar instantly quitted the dogs to rush on his human enemy, while the King, taking his station, and posting himself firmly, presented the sword, with the purpose of aiming it at the boar's throat, or rather chest, within the collar-bone; in which case, the weight of the beast, and the impetuosity of his career, would have served to accelerate his own destruction. But, owing to the wetness of the ground, the King's foot slipped, just as this delicate and perilous manœuvre ought to have been accomplished, and the point of the sword encountering the cuirass of bristles on the outside of the creature's shoulder, glanced off without making any impression, and Louis fell flat on the ground. This was so far fortunate for the Monarch, because the animal, owing to the King's fall, missed his blow in his turn, and only rent with his tusk the King's short hunting-cloak, instead of ripping up his thigh. But as, after running a little a-head in the fury of his course, the boar turned to repeat his attack on the King in the moment when he was rising, the life of Louis was in imminent danger,

when Quentin Durward, who had been thrown out in the chase by the slowness of his horse, but who, nevertheless, had luckily distinguished and followed the blast of the King's horn, rode up, and transfixed the animal with his spear.

The King, who had by this time recovered his feet, came in turn to Durward's assistance, and cut the animal's throat with his sword. Before speaking a word to Quentin, he measured the huge creature not only by paces, but even by feet—then wiped the sweat from his brow, and the blood from his hands—then took off his hunting cap, hung it on a bush, and devoutly made his orisons to the little leaden images which it contained—and then looking upon Durward, said to him, "Is it thou, my young Scot?—thou hast begun thy woodcraft well, and Maitre Pierre owes thee as good entertainment as he gave thee at the Fleur-de-Lys yonder.—Why dost thou not speak? Thou hast lost thy forwardness and fire, methinks, at the Court, where others find both."

Quentin, as shrewd a youth as ever Scottish breeze breathed caution into, was far too wise to embrace the perilous permission of familiarity which he seemed thus invited to use. He answered in very few and well-chosen words, that if he ventured to address his Majesty at all, it could be but to crave pardon for the rustic boldness with which he

had conducted himself when ignorant of his high rank.

"Tush! man," said the King; "I forgive thy sauciness for thy spirit and shrewdness. I admired how near thou didst hit upon my gossip Tristan's occupation. You have nearly tasted of his handy-work since, as I am given to understand. I bid thee beware of him; he is a merchant who deals in rough bracelets and tight necklaces. Help me to my horse—I love thee, and will do thee good. Build on no man's favour but mine—not even on thine uncle's or Lord Crawford's—and say nothing of thy timely aid in this matter of the boar; for if a man makes boast that he has served a King in such a pinch, he must take the braggart humour for its own recompence."

The King then winded his horn, which brought up Dunois and several attendants, whose compliments he received on the slaughter of such a noble animal, without scrupling to appropriate a much greater share of merit than actually belonged to him; for he mentioned Durward's assistance as slightly as a sportsman, who, in boasting of the number of birds which he has bagged, does not always dilate upon the presence and assistance of the game-keeper. He then ordered Dunois to see that the boar's carcase was sent to the brotherhood of Saint Martin, at Tours, to mend their fare upon

holidays, and that they might remember the King in their private devotions.

"And," said Louis, "who hath seen his Eminence my Lord Cardinal? Methinks it were but poor courtesy, and cold regard to Holy Church, to leave him afoot here in the forest."

"May it please you, sire," said Quentin, when he saw that all were silent, "I saw his Lordship the Cardinal accommodated with a horse, on which he left the forest."

"Heaven cares for its own," replied the King. "Set forward, my lords; we'll hunt no more this morning.—You, Sir Squire," addressing Quentin, "reach me my wood-knife—it has dropped from the sheath beside the quarry there. Ride in, Dunois—I follow instantly."

Louis, whose lightest motions were often conducted like stratagems, thus gained an opportunity to ask Quentin privately, "My bonny Scot, thou hast an eye, I see—Can'st thou tell me who helped the Cardinal to a palfrey?—Some stranger, I should suppose; for, as *I* passed without stopping, the courtiers would likely be loath to do him such a turn."

"I saw those who aided his Eminence but an instant, sire," said Quentin; "for I had been unluckily thrown out, and was riding fast, to be in my place; but I think it was the Ambassador of Burgundy and his people."

"Ha!" said Louis.—"Well, be it so—France will match them yet."

There was nothing more remarkable happened, and the King, with his retinue, returned to the Castle.

CHAP. X.

THE SENTINEL.

Where should this music be? i' the air, or the earth?
The Tempest.

——I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.
Comus.

QUENTIN had hardly reached his little cabin, in order to make some necessary changes in his dress, when his worthy relative required to know from him the full particulars which had befallen him at the hunt.

The youth, who could not help thinking that his uncle's hand was probably more powerful than his understanding, took care, in his reply, to leave the King in full possession of the victory which he had seemed desirous to appropriate. The Balafré's reply was an account of how much better he himself would have behaved in the like circumstances, and it was mixed with a gentle censure of his nephew's slackness, in not making in to the King's

assistance, when he might be in imminent peril. The youth had prudence, in answer, to abstain from all farther vindication of his own conduct, excepting, that, according to the rules of wood-craft, he held it ungentle to interfere with the game attacked by another hunter, unless he was specially called upon for his assistance. This discussion was scarce ended, when occasion was afforded Quentin to congratulate himself for observing some reserve towards his kinsman. A low tap at the door announced a visitor—it was presently opened, and Oliver Dain, or Mauvais, or Diable, for by all these names he was known, entered the apartment.

This able but most unprincipled man has been already described, in so far as his exterior is concerned. The aptest resemblance of his motions and manners might perhaps be to those of the domestic cat, which, while couching in seeming slumber, or gliding through the apartment with slow, stealthy, and timid steps, is now engaged in watching the hole of some unfortunate mouse, now in rubbing herself with apparent confidence and fondness against those by whom she desires to be caressed, and, presently after, is flying upon her prey, or scratching, perhaps, the very object of her former cajolements.

He entered with stooping shoulders, a humble and modest look, and threw such a degree of civility into his address to the Seignior Balafré, that no

one who saw the interview could have avoided concluding that he came to ask a boon of the Scottish Archer. He congratulated Lesly on the excellent conduct of his young kinsman in the chase that day, which, he observed, had attracted the King's particular attention. He here paused for a reply; and with his eyes fixed on the ground, save just when once or twice they stole upwards to take a side glance at Quentin, he heard Balafré observe, "That his Majesty had been unlucky in not having himself by his side instead of his nephew, as he would questionless have made in and speared the brute, a matter which he understood Quentin had left upon his Majesty's royal hands, so far as he could learn the story. But it will be a lesson to his Majesty," he said, "while he lives, to mount a man of my inches on a better horse; for how could my great hill of a Flemish dray-horse keep up with his Majesty's Norman runner? I am sure I spurred till his sides were furrowed. It is ill considered, Master Oliver, and you must represent it to his Majesty."

Master Oliver only replied to this observation by turning towards the bold bluff speaker one of those slow, dubious glances, which, accompanied by a slight motion of the hand, and a gentle depression of the head to one side, may be either interpreted as a mute assent to what is said, or as a cautious deprecation of farther prosecution of the subject. It

was a keener, more scrutinizing glance, which he bent on the youth, as he said, with an ambiguous smile, "So, young man, is it the wont of Scotland to suffer your Princes to be endangered for the lack of aid, in such emergencies as this of to-day?"

"It is our custom," answered Quentin, determined to throw no farther light on the subject, "not to encumber them with assistance in honourable pastimes, when they can aid themselves without it. We hold that a Prince in a hunting field must take his chance with others, and that he comes there for the very purpose.—What were woodcraft without fatigue and without danger?"

"You hear the silly boy," said his uncle; "that is always the way with him; he hath an answer or a reason ready to be rendered for every one. I wonder whence he hath caught the gift; I never could give a reason for anything I have ever done in my life, except for eating when I was a-hungry, calling the muster-roll, and such points of duty as the like."

"And pray, worthy Seignior," said the royal tonsor, looking at him from under his eye-lids, "what might your reason be for calling the muster-roll on such occasions?"

"Because the Captain commanded me," said Balafré. "By Saint Giles, I know no other reason! If he had commanded Tyrie or Cunningham, they must have done the same."

"A most military final cause!" said Oliver.—"But, Seignior Balafré, you will be glad, doubtless, to learn, that his Majesty is so far from being displeased with your nephew's conduct, that he hath selected him to execute a piece of duty this afternoon."

"Selected *him*?" said Balafré, in great surprise;—"Selected *me*, I suppose, you mean?"

"I mean precisely as I speak," replied the barber, in a mild but decided tone; "the King hath a commission with which to intrust your nephew."

"Why, wherefore, and for what reason?" said Balafré; "why doth he choose the boy, and not me?"

"I can go no farther back than your own ultimate cause, Seignior Balafré; such are his Majesty's commands. But," said he, "if I might use the presumption to form a conjecture, it may be his Majesty hath work to do, fitter for a youth like your nephew, than for an experienced warrior like yourself, Seignior Balafré.—Wherefore, young gentleman, get your weapons and follow me. Bring with you a harquebuss, for you are to mount sentinel."

"Sentinel!" said the uncle—"Are you sure you are right, Master Oliver? The inner guards have ever been mounted by those only who have (like me) served twelve years in our honourable body."

"I am quite certain of his Majesty's pleasure,"

said Oliver, " and must no longer delay executing it.—Have the goodness to assist to put your nephew in order for the service."

Balafré, who had no ill-nature, or even much jealousy, in his disposition, hastily set about adjusting his nephew's dress, and giving him directions for his conduct under arms, but was unable to refrain from larding them with interjections of surprise at such luck chancing to fall upon the young man so early.

" It had never taken place before in the Scottish Guard," he said, " not even in his own instance. But doubtless his service must be to mount guard over the popinjays and Indian peacocks, which the Venetian ambassador had lately presented to the King—it could be nothing else; and such duty being only fit for a beardless boy, (here he twirled his own grim moustaches,) he was glad the lot had fallen on his fair nephew."

Quick, and sharp of wit, as well as ardent in fancy, Quentin saw visions of higher importance in this early summons to the royal presence, and his heart beat high at the anticipation of rising into speedy distinction. He determined carefully to watch the manners and language of his conductor, which he suspected must, in some cases at least, be interpreted by contraries, as soothsayers are said to discover the interpretation of dreams. He could not but hug himself on having observed strict se-

crecy on the events of the chase, and then formed a resolution, which, for so young a person, had much prudence in it, that while he breathed the air of this secluded and mysterious Court, he would keep his thoughts locked in his bosom, and his tongue under the most careful regulation.

His equipment was soon complete, and, with his harquebuss on his shoulder, (for though they retained the name of Archers, the Scottish Guard very early substituted fire-arms for the long-bow, in the use of which their nation never excelled,) he followed Master Oliver out of the barrack.

His uncle looked long after him, with a countenance in which wonder was blended with curiosity; and though neither envy nor the malignant feelings which it engenders, entered into his honest meditations, there was yet a sense of wounded or diminished self-importance, which mingled with the pleasure excited by his nephew's favourable commencement of service.

He shook his head gravely, opened a privy cupboard, took out a large *bottrine* of stout old wine, shook it to examine how low the contents had ebbed, filled and drank a hearty cup; then took his seat, half reclining, on the great oaken settle, and having once again slowly shaken his head, received so much apparent benefit from the oscillation, that, like the toy called a mandarin, he continued the motion until he dropped into a slumber,

from which he was first roused by the signal to dinner.

When Quentin Durward left his uncle to these sublime meditations, he followed his conductor, Master Oliver, who, without crossing any of the principal courts, led him partly through private passages exposed to the open air, but chiefly through a maze of stairs, vaults, and galleries, communicating with each other by secret doors, and at unexpected points, into a large and spacious latticed gallery, which, from its breadth, might have been almost termed a hall, hung with tapestry more ancient than beautiful, and with a very few of the hard, cold, ghastly-looking pictures, belonging to the first dawn of the arts, which preceded their splendid sunrise. These were designed to represent the Paladins of Charlemagne, who made such a distinguished figure in the romantic history of France; and as the gigantic form of the celebrated Orlando constituted the most prominent figure, the apartment acquired from him the title of Roland's Hall, or Roland's Gallery.

"You will keep watch here," said Oliver, in a low whisper, as if the hard delineations of monarchs and warriors around could have been offended at the elevation of his voice, or as if he had feared to awaken the echoes that lurked among the groined-vaults and Gothic drop-work of this huge and dreary apartment.

"What are the orders and signs of my watch?" answered Quentin, in the same suppressed tone.

"Is your harquebuss loaded?" replied Oliver, without answering his query.

"That," answered Quentin, "is soon done;" and proceeded to charge his weapon, and to light the slow-match, (by which when necessary it was discharged,) at the embers of a wood-fire, which was expiring in the huge hall chimney—a chimney itself so large, that it might have been called a Gothic closet or chapel appertaining to the hall.

When this was performed, Oliver told him that he was ignorant of one of the high privileges of his own corps, which only received orders from the King in person, or the High Constable of France, in lieu of their own officers. "You are placed here by his Majesty's command, young man," added Oliver, "and you will not be long here without knowing wherefore you are summoned. Meantime your walk extends along this gallery. You are permitted to stand still while you list, but on no account to sit down, or quit your weapon. You are not to sing aloud, or whistle, upon any account; but you may, if you list, mutter some of the church's prayers, or what you list that has no offence in it, in a low voice. Farewell, and keep good watch."

"Good watch!" thought the youthful soldier as his guide stole away from him with that noiseless gliding step which was peculiar to him, and va-

nished through a side-door behind the arras—"Good watch! but upon whom, and against whom?—for what, save bats or rats, are there here to contend with, unless these grim old representatives of humanity should start into life for the disturbance of my guard? Well, it is my duty, I suppose, and I must perform it."

With the vigorous purpose of discharging his duty, even to the very rigour, he tried to while away the time with some of the pious hymns which he had learned in the convent in which he had found shelter after the death of his father—allowing in his own mind, that, but for the change of a novice's frock for the rich military dress which he now wore, his soldierly walk in the royal gallery of France resembled greatly those of which he had tired excessively in the cloistered seclusion of Aberbrothock.

Presently, as if to convince himself he now belonged not to the cell but to the world, he chaunted to himself, but in such tone as not to exceed the licence given to him, some of the ancient rude ballads which the old family harper had taught him, of the defeat of the Danes at Aberlemno and Forres, the murther of King Duffus at Forfar, and other pithy sonnets and lays, which appertained to the history of his distant native country, and particularly of the district to which he belonged. This wore away a considerable space of time, and it was

now more than two hours past noon, when Quentin was reminded by his appetite, that the good fathers of Aberbrothock, however strict in demanding his attendance upon the hours of devotion, were no less pointed in summoning him to those of refection; whereas here, in the interior of a royal palace, after a morning spent in exercise, and a noon exhausted in duty, no man seemed to consider it as a natural consequence that he must be impatient for his dinner.

There are, however, charms in sweet sounds which can lull to rest even the natural feelings of impatience, by which Quentin was now visited. At the opposite extremities of the long hall or gallery, were two large doors, ornamented with heavy architraves, probably opening into different suites of apartments, to which the gallery served as a medium of mutual communication. As the sentinel directed his solitary walk betwixt these two entrances, which formed the boundary of his duty, he was startled by a strain of music, which was suddenly waked near one of those doors, and which, at least in his imagination, was a combination of the same lute and voice by which he had been enchanted upon the preceding day. All the dreams of yesterday morning, so much weakened by the agitating circumstances which he had since undergone, again arose more vivid from their slumber, and, planted on the spot where his ear could

most conveniently drink in the sounds, Quentin remained, with his harquebuss shouldered, his mouth half open, ear, eye, and soul directed to the spot, rather the picture of a sentinel than a living form,—without any other idea, than that of catching, if possible, each passing sound of the dulcet melody.

These delightful sounds were but partially heard —they languished, lingered, ceased totally, and were from time to time renewed after uncertain intervals. But, besides that music, like beauty, is often most delightful, or at least most interesting to the imagination, when its charms are but partially displayed, and the imagination is left to fill up what is from distance but imperfectly detailed, Quentin had matter enough to fill up his reverie during the intervals of fascination. He could not doubt, from the report of his uncle's comrades, and the scene which had passed in the presence-chamber that morning, that the syren who thus delighted his ears, was not, as he had profanely supposed, the daughter or kinswoman of a base *Cabaretier*, but the disguised and distressed Countess, for whose cause Kings and Princes were now about to buckle on armour, and put lance in rest. A hundred wild dreams, such as romantic and adventurous youth readily nourished in a romantic and adventurous age, chased from his eyes the bodily presentment of the actual scene, and substituted their own be-

wildering delusions, when at once, and rudely, they were banished by a rough grasp laid upon his weapon, and a harsh voice which exclaimed, close to his ear, "Ha! *Pasques-dieu*, Sir Squire, methinks you keep sleepy ward here!"

The voice was the tuneless, yet impressive and ironical tone of Maitre Pierre, and Quentin, suddenly recalled to himself, saw, with shame and fear, that he had, in his reverie, permitted Louis himself—entering probably by some secret door, and gliding along by the wall, or behind the tapestry —to approach him so nearly, as almost to master his weapon.

The first impulse of his surprise was to free his harquebuss by a violent exertion, which made the King stagger backward into the hall. His next apprehension was, that, in obeying the animal instinct, as it may be termed, which prompts a brave man to resist an attempt to disarm him, he had aggravated, by a personal struggle with the King, the displeasure produced by the negligence with which he had performed his duty upon guard; and, under this impression, he recovered his harquebuss without almost knowing what he did, and, having again shouldered it, stood motionless before the Monarch, whom he had reason to conclude he had mortally offended.

Louis, whose tyrannical disposition was less founded on natural ferocity or cruelty of temper, than on

cold-blooded policy and jealous suspicion, had, nevertheless, a share of that caustic severity which would have made him a despot in private conversation, and always seemed to enjoy the pain which he inflicted on occasions like the present. But he did not push his triumph far, and contented himself with saying,—"Thy service of the morning hath already overpaid some negligence in so young a soldier—Hast thou dined?"

Quentin, who rather looked to be sent to the Provost-Marshal, than greeted with such a compliment, answered humbly in the negative.

"Poor lad," said Louis, in a softer tone than he usually spoke in, "hunger hath made him drowsy.—I know thine appetite is a wolf," he continued; "and I will save thee from one wild beast as thou didst me from another; thou hast been prudent too in that matter, and I thank thee for it. Canst thou yet hold out an hour without food?"

"Four-and-twenty, Sire," replied Durward, "or I were no true Scot."

"I would not for another kingdom be the pasty to encounter thee after such a vigil," said the King; "but the question now is, not of thy dinner, but of my own. I admit to my table this day, and in strict privacy, the Cardinal Balue and this Burgundian—this Count de Crevecœur, and something

may chance—the devil is most busy when foes meet on terms of truce."

He stopped, and remained silent, with a deep and gloomy look. As the King was in no haste to proceed, Quentin at length ventured to ask what his duty was to be in these circumstances.

"To keep watch at the beauffet, with thy loaded weapon," said Louis; "and if there is treason, to shoot the traitor dead."

"Treason, Sire! and in this guarded Castle!" exclaimed Durward.

"You think it impossible," said the King, not offended, it would seem, by his frankness; "but our history has shewn that treason can creep into an augre-hole.—Treason excluded by guards! O thou silly boy!—*quis custodiat ipsos custodes*—who shall exclude the treason of those very warders?"

"Their Scottish honour," answered Durward, boldly.

"True; most right—thou pleasest me," said the King, cheerfully; "the Scottish honour was ever true, and I trust it accordingly. But Treason!"—Here he relapsed into his former gloomy mood, and traversed the apartment with unequal steps—"She sits at our feasts, she sparkles in our bowls, she wears the beard of our counsellors, the smiles of our courtiers, the crazy laugh of our jesters—above all, she lies hid under the friendly air

of a reconciled enemy. Louis of Orleans trusted John of Burgundy—he was murdered in the Rue Barbette. John of Burgundy trusted the faction of Orleans—he was murdered on the bridge of Montereau. I will trust no one—no one. Hark ye; I will keep my eye on that insolent Count; ay, and on the Churchman too, whom I hold not too faithful. When I say, *Ecosse, en avant*, shoot Crevecœur dead on the spot."

"It is my duty," said Quentin, "your Majesty's life being endangered."

"Certainly—I mean it no otherwise," said the King.—"What should I get by slaying this insolent soldier?—Were it the Constable Saint Paul indeed"—Here he paused, as if he thought he had said a word too much, but resumed, laughing, "There's our brother-in-law, James of Scotland—your own James, Quentin—poniarded the Douglas when on a hospitable visit, within his own royal castle of Skirling."

"Of Stirling," said Quentin, "and so please your highness.—It was a deed of which came little good."

"Stirling call you the castle?" said the King, overlooking the latter part of Quentin's speech—"Well, let it be Stirling—the name is nothing to the purpose. But I meditate no injury to these men—none—It would serve me nothing. They

may not purpose equally fair by me.—I rely on thy harquebuss."

"I shall be prompt at the signal," said Quentin; "but yet——"

"You hesitate," said the King. "Speak out—I give thee full leave. From such as thou hints may be caught that are right valuable."

"I would only presume to say," replied Quentin, "that your Majesty having occasion to distrust this Burgundian, I marvel that you suffer him to approach so near your person, and that in privacy."

"O content you, Sir Squire," said the King. "There are some dangers, which, when they are braved, disappear, and which yet, when there is an obvious and apparent dread of them displayed, become certain and inevitable. When I walk boldly up to a surly mastiff, and caress him, it is ten to one I sooth him to good temper; if I shew fear of him, he flies on me and rends me. I will be thus far frank with thee—It concerns me nearly that this man returns not to his headlong master in a resentful humour. I run my risk, therefore. I have never shunned to expose my life for the weal of my kingdom.—Follow me."

Louis led his young Life-guards-man, for whom he seemed to have taken a special favour, through the side-door by which he had himself entered, saying, as he shewed it him, "He who would thrive

at Court must know the private wickets and concealed stair-cases—ay, and the traps and pitfalls of the palace, as well as the principal entrances, folding-doors, and portals."

After several turns and passages, the King entered a small vaulted room, where a table was prepared for dinner with three covers. The whole furniture and arrangements of the room were plain almost to meanness. A beauffet, or folding and movable cupboard, held a few pieces of gold and silver plate, and was the only article in the chamber which had, in the slightest degree, the appearance of royalty. Behind this cupboard, and completely hidden by it, was the post which Louis assigned to Quentin Durward; and after having ascertained, by going to different parts of the room, that he was invisible on all quarters, he gave him his last charge—"Remember the word, *Ecosse, en avant;* and so soon as ever I utter these sounds, throw down the screen—spare not for cup or goblet, and be sure thou take good aim at Crevecœur —If thy piece fail, cling to him, and use thy knife —Oliver and I can deal with the Cardinal."

Having thus spoken, he whistled aloud, and summoned into the apartment Oliver, who was premier-valet of the chamber as well as barber, and who, in fact, performed all offices immediately connected with the King's person, and who now appeared, attended by two old men, who were the

only assistants or waiters at the royal table. So soon as the King had taken his place, the visitors were admitted; and Quentin, though himself unseen, was so situated as to remark all the particulars of the interview.

The King welcomed his visitors with a degree of cordiality, which Quentin had the utmost difficulty to reconcile with the directions which he had previously received, and the purpose for which he stood behind the beauffet with his deadly weapon in readiness. Not only did Louis appear totally free from apprehension of any kind, but one would have supposed that those guests whom he had done the high honour to admit to his table, were the very persons in whom he could most unreservedly confide, and whom he was most willing to honour. Nothing could be more dignified, and, at the same time, more courteous, than his demeanour. While all around him, including even his own dress, was far beneath what the petty princes of the kingdom displayed in their festivities, his own language and manners were those of a mighty Sovereign in his most condescending mood. Quentin was tempted to suppose, either that the whole of his previous conversation with Louis had been a dream, or that the dutiful demeanour of the Cardinal, and the frank, open, and gallant bearing of the Burgundian noble, had entirely erased the King's suspicion.

But whilst the guests, in obedience to the King, were in the act of placing themselves at the table, his Majesty darted one keen glance on them, and then instantly directed his look to Quentin's post. This was done in an instant; but the glance conveyed so much doubt and hatred towards his guests, such a peremptory injunction on Quentin to be watchful in attendance, and prompt in execution, that no room was left for doubting that the sentiments of Louis continued unaltered, and his apprehensions unabated. He was, therefore, more than ever astonished at the deep veil under which that Monarch was able to conceal the movements of his jealous disposition.

Appearing to have entirely forgotten the language which Crevecœur had held towards him in the face of his Court, the King conversed with him of old times, of events which had occurred during his own exile in the territories of Burgundy, and inquired respecting all the nobles with whom he had been then familiar, as if that period had indeed been the happiest of his life, and as if he retained towards all who had contributed to soften the term of his exile the kindest and most grateful sentiments.

"To an ambassador of another nation," he said, "I would have thrown something of state into our reception; but to an old friend, who shared my board at the Castle of Genappes, I wished to shew

myself, as I love best to live, old Louis of Valois, as simple and plain as any of his Parisian *badauds*. But I directed them to make some better cheer for you, Sir Count, for I know your Burgundian proverb, '*Mieux vault bon repas que bel habit*;' and I bid them have some care of our table. For our wine, you know well it is the subject of an old emulation betwixt France and Burgundy, which we will presently reconcile; for I will drink to you in Burgundy, and you, Sir Count, shall pledge me in Champagne.—Here, Oliver, let me have a cup of *Vin d'Auxerre*;" and he hummed gaily a song then well known—

"*Auxerre est le boisson des Rois.*"

"Here, Sir Count, I drink to the health of the noble Duke of Burgundy, our kind and loving cousin.—Oliver, replenish yon golden cup with *Vin de Rheims*, and give it to the Count on your knee—he represents our loving brother.—My Lord Cardinal, we will ourself fill your cup."

"You have already, Sire, even to overflowing," said the Cardinal, with the lowly mien of a favourite towards an indulgent master.

"Because we know that your Eminence can carry it with a steady hand," said Louis. "But which side do you espouse in the great controversy —Sillery or Auxerre—France or Burgundy?"

"I will stand neutral, Sire," said the Cardinal, "and replenish my cup with Auvernat."

"A neutral has a perilous part to sustain," said the King; but as he observed the Cardinal colour somewhat, he glided from the subject, and added, "But you prefer the Auvernat, because it is so noble it suffers not water.—You, Sir Count, hesitate to fill your cup. I trust you have found no national bitterness at the bottom."

"I would, Sir," said the Count de Crevecœur, "that all national quarrels could be as pleasantly ended as the rivalry betwixt our vineyards."

"With time, Sir Count—with time—such time as you have taken to your draught of Champagne.—And now that it is finished, favour me by putting the goblet in your bosom, and keeping it as a pledge of our regard. It is not to every one that we would part with it. It belonged of yore to that terror of France, Henry V. of England, and was taken when Rouen was reduced, and those islanders expelled from Normandy by the joint arms of France and Burgundy. It cannot be better bestowed than on a noble and valiant Burgundian, who well knows that in the union of these two nations depends the continuance of the freedom of the continent from the English yoke."

The Count made a suitable answer, and Louis gave unrestrained way to the satirical gaiety of disposition which sometimes enlivened the darker

shades of his character. Leading, of course, the conversation, his remarks, always shrewd and caustic, and often actually witty, were seldom good-natured, and the anecdotes with which he illustrated them were often more humorous than delicate; but in no one word, syllable, or letter, did he betray the state of mind of one who, apprehensive of assassination, hath in his apartment an armed soldier, with his piece loaded, in order to prevent or anticipate the deed.

The Count of Crevecœur gave frankly into the King's humour; while the smooth churchman laughed at every jest, and enhanced every ludicrous idea, without expressing any shame at expressions which made the rustic young Scot blush even in his place of concealment. In about an hour and a half the tables were drawn; and the King, taking courteous leave of his guests, gave the signal that it was his desire to be alone.

So soon as all, even Oliver, had retired, he called Quentin from his place of concealment; but with a voice so faint, that the youth could scarce believe it to be the same which had so lately given animation to the jest, and zest to the tale. As he approached, he saw an equal change in his countenance. The light of assumed vivacity had left his eyes, the smile had deserted his face, and he exhibited all the fatigue of a celebrated actor, when he

has finished the exhausting representation of some favourite character.

"Thy watch is not yet over," said he to Quentin—"refresh thyself for an instant—yonder dormant table affords the means—I will then instruct thee in thy farther duty. Meanwhile, it is ill talking between a full man and a fasting."

He threw himself back on his seat, covered his brow with his hand, and was silent.

CHAP. XI.

THE HALL OF ROLAND.

Painters shew Cupid blind—Hath Hymen eyes?
Or is his sight warp'd by those spectacles
Which parents, guardians, and advisers, lend him,
That he may look through them on lands and mansions,
On jewels, gold, and all such rich dotations,
And see their value ten times magnified?—
Methinks 'twill brook a question.

The Miseries of enforced Marriage.

Louis the XIth of France, though the sovereign in Europe who was fondest and most jealous of power, desired only its substantial enjoyment; and though he knew well enough, and at times exacted strictly, the observances due to his rank, was in general singularly careless of show.

In a prince of better qualities, the familiarity with which he invited subjects to his board—nay, occasionally sat at theirs,—must have been highly popular; and even such as he was, the King's homeliness of manners atoned for many of his vices with that class of his subjects who were not particularly exposed to their consequences. The *tiers etat*, or commons of France, who rose to more opu-

lence and consequence under the reign of this sagacious Prince, respected his person, though they loved him not; and it was resting on their support that he was enabled to make his party good against the hatred of the nobles, who conceived that he diminished the honour of the French crown, and obscured their own splendid privileges, by the very neglect of form which gratified the citizens and commons.

With patience, which most other princes would have considered as degrading, and not without a sense of amusement, the Monarch of France waited till his Life-guards-man had satisfied the keenness of a youthful appetite. It may be supposed, however, that Quentin had too much sense and prudence to put the royal patience to a long or tedious proof; and indeed he was repeatedly desirous to break off his repast ere Louis would permit him. "I see it in thine eye," he said, "that thy courage is not half abated. Go on—God and Saint Dennis!—charge again. I tell thee that meat and mass (crossing himself) never hindered the work of a good Christian man. Take a cup of wine; but mind thou be cautious of the wine-pot—it is the vice of thy countrymen as well as of the English, who, lacking that folly, are the choicest soldiers ever wore armour. And now wash speedily—forget not thy *benedicite*, and follow me."

Quentin obeyed, and, conducted by a different,

but as maze-like an approach as he had formerly passed, he followed Louis into the Hall of Roland.

"Take notice," said the King, imperatively, "thou hast never left this post—let that be thine answer to thy kinsman and comrades—and, hark thee, to bind the recollection on thy memory, I give thee this gold chain, (flinging on his arm one of considerable value.) If I go not brave myself, those whom I trust have ever the means to ruffle it with the best. But, when such chains as these bind not the tongue from wagging too freely, my gossip, L'Hermite, hath an amulet for the throat, which never fails to work a certain cure. And now attend.—No man, save Oliver or I myself, enters here this evening; but ladies will come hither, perhaps from the one extremity of the hall, perhaps from the other, perhaps from both. You may answer if they address you, but, being on your duty, your answer must be brief; and you must neither address them in your turn, nor engage in any prolonged discourse. But hearken to what they say. Thine ears, as well as thy hands, are mine—I have bought thee body and soul. Therefore, if thou hearest aught of their conversation, thou must retain it in memory until it is communicated to me, and then forget it.—And, now I think better on it, it will be best that thou pass for a Scottish recruit, who hath come straight down from his mountains,

and hath not yet acquired our most Christian language.—Right.—So, if they speak to thee, thou wilt *not* answer—this will free you from embarrassment, and lead them to converse without regard to your presence. You understand me.—Farewell. Be wary, and thou hast a friend."

The King had scarce spoken these words ere he disappeared behind the arras, leaving Quentin to meditate on what he had seen and heard. The youth was in one of those situations from which it is pleasanter to look forward than to look back; for the reflection that he had been planted like a marksman in a thicket who watches for a stag, to take the life of the noble Count of Crevecœur, had in it nothing ennobling. It was very true, that the King's measures seemed on this occasion merely cautionary and defensive; but how did he know but he might be soon commanded on some offensive operation of the same kind? This would be an unpleasant crisis, since it was plain, from the character of his master, that there would be destruction in refusing, while his honour told him there would be disgrace in complying. He turned his thoughts from this subject of reflection, with the sage consolation so often adopted by youth when prospective dangers intrude themselves on their mind, that it was time enough to think what was to be done when the emergence actually arrived, and that sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.

Quentin made use of this sedative reflection the more easily, that the last commands of the King had given him something more agreeable to think of than his own condition. The Lady of the Lute was certainly one of those to whom his attention was to be dedicated; and well in his mind did he promise to obey one part of the King's mandate, and listen with diligence to every word that might drop from her lips, that he might know if the magic of her conversation equalled that of her music. But with as much sincerity did he swear to himself, that no part of her discourse should be reported by him to the King, which might affect the fair speaker otherwise than favourably.

Meantime, there was no fear of his again slumbering on his post. Each passing breath of wind, which, finding its way through the open lattice, waved the old arras, sounded like the approach of the fair object of his expectation. He felt, in short, all that mysterious anxiety, and eagerness of expectation, which is always the companion of love, and sometimes hath a considerable share in creating it.

At length, a door actually creaked and jingled, (for the doors even of palaces did not in the fifteenth century turn on their hinges so noiseless as ours;) but, alas! it was not at that end of the hall from which the lute had been heard. It opened, however, and a female figure entered, followed by two

others, whom she directed by a sign to remain without, while she herself came forward into the hall. By her imperfect and unequal gait, which shewed to peculiar disadvantage as she traversed this long gallery, Quentin at once recognized the Princess Joan, and, with the respect which became his situation, drew himself up in a fitting attitude of silent vigilance, and lowered his weapon to her as she passed. She acknowledged the courtesy by a gracious inclination of her head, and he had an opportunity of seeing her countenance more distinctly than he had in the morning.

There was little in the features of this ill-fated Princess to atone for the misfortune of her shape and gait. Her face was, indeed, by no means disagreeable in itself, though destitute of beauty; and there was a meek expression of suffering patience in her large blue eyes, which were commonly fixed upon the ground. But besides that she was extremely pallid in complexion, her skin had the yellowish discoloured tinge which accompanies habitual bad health; and though her teeth were white and regular, her lips were thin and pale. The Princess had a profusion of flaxen hair, but it was so light-coloured, as to be almost of a bluish tinge; and her tire-woman, who doubtless considered the luxuriance of her mistress's tresses as a beauty, had not greatly improved matters, by arranging them in curls around her pale countenance, to which they gave

an expression almost unearthly. To make matters still worse, she had chosen a vest or cymar of a pale green silk, which gave her, on the whole, a ghastly and even spectral appearance.

While Quentin followed this singular apparition with eyes in which curiosity was blended with compassion, for every look and motion of the Princess seemed to call for the latter feeling, two ladies entered from the upper end of the apartment.

One of these was the young person, who, upon Louis's summons, had served him with fruit, while Quentin made his memorable breakfast at the Fleur-de-Lys. Invested now with all the mysterious dignity belonging to the nymph of the veil and lute, and proved, besides, (at least in Quentin's estimation,) to be the high-born heiress of a rich earldom, her beauty made ten times the impression upon him which it had done when he beheld in her one whom he deemed the daughter of a paltry innkeeper, in attendance upon a rich and humorous old burgher. He now wondered what fascination could ever have concealed from him her real character. Yet her dress was nearly as simple as before, being a suit of deep mourning, without any ornaments. Her head-dress was only a veil of crape, which was entirely thrown back, so as to leave her face discovered; and it was only Quentin's knowledge of her actual rank, which gave in his estimation new elegance to her beautiful shape, a dignity

to her step which had before remained unnoticed, and to her regular features, brilliant complexion, and dazzling eyes, an air of conscious nobleness, that enhanced their beauty.

Had death been the penalty, Durward must needs have rendered to this beauty and her companion the same homage which he had just paid to the royalty of the Princess. They received it as those who were accustomed to the deference of inferiors, and returned it with courtesy; but he thought—perhaps it was but a youthful vision—that the young lady coloured slightly, kept her eyes on the ground, and seemed embarrassed, though in a trifling degree, as she returned his military salutation. This must have been owing to her recollection of the audacious stranger in the neighbouring turret at the Fleur-de-Lys; but did that discomposure express displeasure? This question he had no means to determine.

The companion of the youthful Countess, dressed like herself simply, and in deep mourning, was at the age when women are apt to cling most closely to that reputation for beauty which has for years been diminishing. She had still remains enough to shew what the power of her charms must once have been, and, remembering past triumphs, it was evident from her manner that she had not relinquished the pretensions to future conquests. She was tall and graceful, though somewhat haughty in her de-

portment, and returned the salute of Quentin with a smile of gracious condescension, whispering, the next instant, something into her companion's ear, who turned towards the soldier, as if to comply with some hint from the elder lady, but answered, nevertheless, without raising her eyes. Quentin could not help suspecting that the observation called on the young lady to notice his own good mien; and he was (I do not know why) pleased with the idea, that the party referred to did not choose to look at him, in order to verify with her own eyes the truth of the observation. Probably he thought there was already a sort of mysterious connection beginning to exist between them, which gave importance to the slightest trifle.

This reflection was momentary, for he was instantly wrapped up in attention to the meeting of the Princess with these stranger ladies. She had stood still upon their entrance, in order to receive them, conscious, perhaps, that motion did not become her well; and as she was somewhat embarrassed in receiving and repaying their compliments, the elder stranger, ignorant of the rank of the party whom she addressed, was led to pay her salutation in a manner, rather as if she conferred than received an honour through the interview.

"I rejoice, madam," she said, with a smile, which was meant to express condescension at once and encouragement, "that we are at length permitted the

society of such a respectable person of our own sex as you appear to be. I must say, that my niece and I have had but little for which to thank the hospitality of King Louis—Nay, niece, never pluck my sleeve—I am sure I read in the looks of this young lady, sympathy for our situation.—Since we came hither, fair madam, we have been used little better than mere prisoners; and after a thousand invitations to throw our cause and our persons under the protection of France, the Most Christian King has afforded us but a base inn for our residence, and now a corner of this moth-eaten palace, out of which we are only permitted to creep towards sunset, as if we were bats or owls, whose appearance in the sunshine is to be held matter of ill omen."

"I am sorry," said the Princess, faltering with the awkward embarrassment of the interview, "that we have been unable, hitherto, to receive you according to your deserts.—Your niece, I trust, is better satisfied?"

"Much—much better than I can express," answered the youthful Countess—"I sought but safety, and I have found solitude and secrecy besides. The seclusion of our former residence, and the still greater solitude of that now assigned to us, augment, in my eye, the favour which the King vouchsafed to us unfortunate fugitives."

"Silence, my silly cousin," said the elderly lady, "and let us speak according to our conscience, since

at last we are alone with one of our own sex—I say alone, for that handsome young soldier is a mere statue, since he seems not to have the use of his limbs, and I am given to understand he wants that of his tongue, at least in civilized language—I say, since no one but this lady can understand us, I must own there is nothing I have regretted equal to taking this French journey. I looked for a splendid reception, tournaments, carousals, pageants, and festivals; and instead of which, all has been seclusion and obscurity! and the best society whom the King introduced to us, was a Bohemian vagabond, by whom he directed us to correspond with our friends in Flanders.—Perhaps," said the lady, "it is his politic intention to mew us up here until our lives' end, that he may seize on our estates, on the extinction of the ancient house of Croye. The Duke of Burgundy was not so cruel; he offered my niece a husband, though he was a bad one."

"I should have thought the veil preferable to an evil husband," said the Princess, with difficulty finding opportunity to interpose a word.

"One would at least wish to have the choice, madam," replied the voluble dame. "It is, Heaven knows, on account of my niece that I speak; for myself, I have long laid aside thoughts of changing my condition. I see you smile, but, by my halidome, it is true—yet that is no excuse for the King, whose conduct, like his person, hath more resemblance to

that of old Michaud, the money-changer of Ghent, than to the successor of Charlemagne."

"Hold!" said the Princess; "remember you speak of my father."

"Of your father!" replied the Burgundian lady in surprise.

"Of my father," repeated the Princess, with dignity. "I am Joan of France.—But fear not, madam," she continued, in the gentle tone which was natural to her, "you designed no offence, and I have taken none. Command my influence to render your exile, and that of this interesting young person, more supportable. Alas! it is but little I have in my power; but it is willingly offered."

Deep and submissive was the reverence with which the Countess Hameline de Croye, so was the elder lady called, received the obliging offer of the Princess's protection. She had been long the inhabitant of Courts, was mistress of the manners which are there acquired, and held firmly the established rule of courtiers of all ages, who, although their usual private conversation turns upon the vices and follies of their patrons, and on the injuries and neglect which they themselves have sustained, never suffer such hints to drop from them in the presence of the Sovereign or those of his family. The lady was, therefore, scandalized to the last degree at the mistake which had induced her to speak so indecorously in presence of the daughter of Louis. She

would have exhausted herself in expressing regret and making apologies, had she not been put to silence and restored to equanimity by the Princess, who requested, in the most gentle manner, yet which, from a Daughter of France, had the weight of a command, that no more might be said in the way either of excuse or of explanation.

The Princess Joan then took her own chair with a dignity which became her, and compelled the two strangers to sit, one on either hand, to which the younger consented with unfeigned and respectful diffidence, and the elder with an affectation of deep humility and respect, which was intended for such. They spoke together, but in such a low tone, that the sentinel could not overhear their discourse, and only remarked, that the Princess seemed to bestow much of her regard on the younger and more interesting lady; and that the Countess Hameline, though speaking a great deal more, attracted less of the Princess's attention by her full flow of conversation and compliment, than did her kinswoman by her brief and modest replies to what was addressed to her.

The conversation of the ladies had not lasted a quarter of an hour, when the door at the lower end of the hall opened, and a man entered shrouded in a riding-cloak. Mindful of the King's injunction, and determined not to be a second time caught slumbering, Quentin instantly moved towards the

intruder, and, interposing between him and the ladies, requested him to retire instantly.

"By whose command?" said the stranger, in a tone of contemptuous surprise.

"By that of the King," said Quentin, firmly, "which I am placed here to enforce."

"Not against Louis of Orleans," said the Duke, dropping his cloak.

The young man hesitated a moment; but how enforce his orders against the first Prince of the blood, about to be allied, as the report now generally went, with the King's own family?

"Your Highness's pleasure," he said, "is too great to be withstood by me. I trust your Highness will bear me witness that I have done the duty of my post, so far as your will permitted."

"Go to—you shall have no blame, young soldier," said Orleans; and passing forwards, paid his compliments to the Princess, with that air of constraint which always marked his courtesy when addressing her.

"He had been dining," he said, "with Dunois, and understanding there was society in Roland's Gallery, he had ventured on the freedom of adding one to the number."

The colour which mounted into the pale cheek of the unfortunate Joan, and which for the moment spread something of beauty over her features, evinced that this addition to the company was anything

but indifferent to her. She hastened to present the Prince to the two ladies of Croye, who received him with the respect due to his eminent rank; and the Princess, pointing to a chair, requested him to join their conversation party.

The Duke declined the freedom of assuming a seat in such society; but taking a cushion from one of the settles, he laid it at the feet of the beautiful young Countess of Croye, and so seated himself, that, without appearing to neglect the Princess, he was enabled to bestow the greater share of his attention on her beautiful neighbour.

At first, it seemed as if this arrangement rather pleased than offended his destined bride. She encouraged the Duke in his gallantries towards the fair stranger, and seemed to regard them as complimentary to herself. But the Duke of Orleans, though accustomed to subject his mind to the stern yoke of his uncle when in the King's presence, had enough of princely nature to induce him to follow his own inclinations whenever that restraint was withdrawn; and his high rank giving him a right to overstep the ordinary ceremonies, and advance at once to familiarity, his praises of the Countess Isabelle's beauty became so energetic, and flowed with such unrestrained freedom, owing perhaps to his having drunk a little more wine than usual—for Dunois was no enemy to the worship of Bacchus—that at length he seemed almost impassioned, and

the presence of the Princess appeared well nigh forgotten.

The tone of compliment which he indulged was grateful only to one individual in the circle; for the Countess Hameline already anticipated the dignity of an alliance with the first Prince of the blood, by means of her whose birth, beauty, and large possessions, rendered such an ambitious consummation by no means impossible, even in the eyes of a less sanguine projector, could the views of Louis XI. have been left out of the calculation of chances. The younger Countess listened to the Duke's gallantries with anxiety and embarrassment, and ever and anon turned an entreating look towards the Princess, as if requesting her to come to her relief. But the wounded feelings, and the timidity of Joan of France, rendered her incapable of an effort to make the conversation more general; and at length, excepting a few interjectional civilities of the Lady Hameline, it was maintained almost exclusively by the Duke himself, though at the expense of the younger Countess of Croye, whose beauty formed the theme of his high-flown eloquence.

Nor must I forget that there was a third person, the unregarded sentinel, who saw his fair visions melt away like wax before the sun, as the Duke persevered in the warm tenor of his passionate discourse. At length the Countess Isabelle de Croye made a determined effort to cut short what was be-

coming intolerably disagreeable to her, especially from the pain to which the conduct of the Duke was apparently subjecting the Princess.

Addressing the latter, she said, modestly, but with some firmness, that the first boon she had to claim from her promised protection was, "that her Highness would undertake to convince the Duke of Orleans, that the ladies of Burgundy, though inferior in wit and manners to those of France, were not such absolute fools, as to be pleased with no other conversation than that of extravagant compliment."

"I grieve, lady," said the Duke, preventing the Princess's answer, "that you will satirize, in the same sentence, the beauty of the dames of Burgundy, and the sincerity of the knights of France. If we are hasty and extravagant in the expression of our admiration, it is because we love as we fight, without letting cold deliberation come into our bosoms, and surrender to the fair with the same rapidity with which we defeat the valiant."

"The beauty of our countrywomen," said the young Countess, with more of reproof than she had yet ventured to use towards the high-born suitor, "is as unfit to claim such triumphs, as the valour of the men of Burgundy is incapable of yielding them."

"I respect your patriotism, Countess," said the Duke; "and the last branch of your theme shall

not be impugned by me, till a Burgundian knight shall offer to sustain it with lance in rest. But for the injustice which you have done to the charms which your land produces, I appeal from yourself to yourself.—Look there," he said, pointing to a large mirror, the gift of the Venetian republic, and then of the highest rarity and value, " and tell me, as you look, what is the heart that can resist the charms there represented ?"

The Princess, unable to sustain any longer the neglect of her lover, here sunk backwards on her chair, with a sigh, which at once recalled the Duke from the land of romance, and induced the Lady Hameline to ask whether her Highness found herself ill.

" A sudden pain shot through my forehead," said the Princess, attempting to smile; " but I shall be presently better."

Her increasing paleness contradicted her words, and induced the Lady Hameline to call for assistance, as the Princess was about to faint.

The Duke, biting his lip, and cursing the folly which could not keep guard over his tongue, ran to summon the Princess's attendants, who were in the next chamber; and when they came hastily, with the usual remedies, he could not but, as a cavalier and gentleman, give assistance to support and to recover her. His voice, rendered almost tender by

pity and self-reproach, was the most powerful means of recalling her to herself, and just as the swoon was passing away, the King himself entered the apartment.

CHAP. XII.

THE POLITICIAN.

This is a lecturer so skill'd in policy,
That (no disparagement to Satan's cunning,)
He well might read a lesson to the devil,
And teach the old seducer new temptations.

Old Play.

As Louis entered the Gallery, he bent his brows in the manner we have formerly described as peculiar to him, and sent, from under his gathered and gloomy eyebrows, a keen look on all around; in darting which, as Quentin afterwards declared, his eyes seemed to turn so small, so fierce, and so piercing, as to resemble those of an aroused adder looking through the bush of heath in which he lies coiled.

When, by this momentary and sharpened glance, the King had reconnoitred the cause of the bustle which was in the apartment, his first address was to the Duke of Orleans.

"You here, my fair cousin?" he said;—and turning to Quentin, added sternly, "Had you not charge?"

"Forgive the young man, Sire," said the Duke; "he did not neglect his duty; but I was informed that the Princess was in this gallery."

"And I warrant you would not be withstood when you came hither to pay your court," said the King, whose detestable hypocrisy persisted in representing the Duke as participating in a passion which was felt only on the side of his unhappy daughter; "and it is thus you debauch the sentinels of my guard, young man?—But what cannot be pardoned to a gallant who lives *par amours!*"

The Duke of Orleans raised his head, as if about to reply, in some manner which might correct the opinion conveyed in the King's observation; but the instinctive reverence, not to say fear, of Louis, in which he had been bred from childhood, chained up his voice.

"And Joan hath been ill?" said the King; "but do not be grieved, Louis; it will soon pass away; lend her your arm to her apartment, while I will conduct these strange ladies to theirs."

The order was given in a tone which amounted to a command, and Orleans accordingly made his exit with the Princess at one extremity of the gallery, while the King, ungloving his right hand, courteously handed the Countess Isabelle and her kinswoman to their apartment, which opened from the other. He bowed profoundly as they entered, and remained standing on the threshold for a mi-

nute after they had disappeared; then, with great composure, shut the door by which they had retired, and turning the huge key, took it from the lock and put it into his girdle,—an appendage which gave him still more perfectly the air of some old miser, who cannot journey in comfort unless he bear with him the key of his treasure-chest.

With slow and pensive pace, and eyes fixed on the ground, Louis now paced towards Quentin Durward, who, expecting his share of the royal displeasure, viewed his approach with no little anxiety.

"Thou hast done wrong," said the King, raising his eyes, and fixing them firmly on him when he had come within a yard of him,—"thou hast done foul wrong, and deservest to die.—Speak not a word in defence!—What hadst thou to do with Dukes or Princesses?—what with *any*thing but my order?"

"So please your Majesty," said the young soldier, "what could I do?"

"What could'st thou do when thy post was forcibly passed?" answered the King, scornfully,—"What is the use of that weapon on thy shoulder?—Thou should'st have levelled thy piece, and if the presumptuous rebel did not retire on the instant, he should have died within this very hall! Go—pass into these farther apartments. In the first thou wilt find a large staircase, which leads to

the inner Bailley; there thou wilt find Oliver Dain. Send him to me—do thou begone to thy quarters. —As thou dost value thy life, be not so loose of thy tongue as thou hast been this day slack of thy hand."

Well pleased to escape so easily, yet with a soul which revolted at the cold-blooded cruelty which the King seemed to require from him in the execution of his duty, Durward took the road indicated, hastened down stairs, and communicated the royal pleasure to Oliver, who was waiting in the court beneath. The wily tonsor bowed, sighed, and smiled, as, with a voice even softer than ordinary, he wished the youth a good evening; and they parted, Quentin to his quarters, and Oliver to attend the King.

In this place, the Memoirs which we have chiefly followed in compiling this true history, were unhappily defective; for, founded chiefly on information supplied by Quentin, they conveyed no information concerning the dialogue which, in his absence, took place between the King and his secret counsellor. Fortunately, the Library of Hautlieu contained a manuscript copy of the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of Jean de Troyes, much more full than that which has been printed; to which are added several curious memoranda, which we incline to think were written down by Oliver himself after the death of his master, and before he had the

happiness to be rewarded with the halter which he had so long merited. From this we have been able to extract a very full account of his conversation with Louis upon the present occasion, which throws a light upon the policy of that Prince, which we might otherwise have sought for in vain.

When the favourite attendant entered the Gallery of Roland, he found the King pensively seated upon the chair which his daughter had left some minutes before. Well acquainted with his temper, he glided on with his noiseless step until he had just crossed the line of the King's sight, so as to make him aware of his presence, then shrank modestly backward and out of sight, until he should be summoned to speak or to listen. The Monarch's first address was an unpleasant one:—"So, Oliver, your fine schemes are melting like snow before the south wind!—I pray to our Lady of Embrun that they resemble not the ice-heaps of which the Switzer churls tell such stories, and come rushing down upon our heads."

"I have heard with concern that all is not well, Sire," answered Oliver.

"Not well!" exclaimed the King, rising and hastily marching up and down the gallery,—"All is ill, man—and as ill nearly as possible;—so much for thy fond romantic advice, that I, of all men, should become a protector of distressed damsels! I tell thee Burgundy is arming, and on the eve of

closing an alliance with England. And Edward, who hath his hands idle at home, will pour his thousands upon us through that unhappy gate of Calais. Singly, I might cajole or defy them; but united, united—and with the discontent and treachery of that villain Saint Paul!—All thy fault, Oliver, who counselled me to receive the women, and to use the services of that damned Bohemian to carry messages to their vassals."

"My lord," said Oliver, "you know my reasons. The Countess's domains lie between the frontiers of Burgundy and Flanders—her castle is almost impregnable—her rights over neighbouring estates are such as, if well supported, cannot but give much annoyance to Burgundy, were the lady but wedded to one who should be friendly to France."

"It is, it *is* a tempting bait," said the King; "and could we have concealed her being here, we might have arranged such a marriage for this rich heiress.—But that cursed Bohemian, how could'st thou recommend such a heathen hound for a commission which required trust?"

"Please you," said Oliver, "to remember, it was your Grace's self who trusted him too far—much farther than I recommended. He would have borne a letter trustily enough to the Countess's kinsman, telling him to hold out her castle, and promising speedy relief; but your Highness must needs put his prophetic powers to the test;

and thus he became possessed of secrets which were worth betraying."

"I am ashamed, I am ashamed,"—said Louis. "And yet, Oliver, they say that these heathen people are descended from the sage Chaldeans, who did read the mysteries of the stars in the plains of Shinar."

Well aware that his master, with all his acuteness and sagacity, was the more prone to be deceived by soothsayers, astrologers, diviners, and all that race of pretenders to occult science, that he conceived himself to have some skill in these arts, Oliver dared to press this point no farther; and only observed that the Bohemian had been a bad prophet on his own account, else he would have avoided returning to Tours, and saved himself from the gallows he had merited.

"It often happens that those who are gifted with prophetic knowledge," answered Louis, with much gravity, "have not the power of foreseeing those events in which they themselves are personally interested."

"Under your Majesty's favour," replied the confidant, "that seems as if a man could not see his own hand by means of the candle which he holds, and which shews him every other object in the apartment."

"He cannot see his own features by the light which shews the faces of others," replied Louis;

"and that is the more faithful illustration of the case.—But this is foreign to my purpose at present. The Bohemian hath had his reward, and peace be with him.—But these ladies—Not only does Burgundy threaten us with war for harbouring them, but their presence is like to interfere with my projects in my own family.. My simple cousin of Orleans hath seen this damsel, and I prophesy that the sight of her is like to make him less pliable in the matter of his alliance with Joan."

"Your Majesty," answered the counsellor, "may send the ladies of Croye back to Burgundy, and so make your peace with the Duke. Many might murmur at this as dishonourable; but if necessity demands the sacrifice——"

"If profit demanded the sacrifice, Oliver, the sacrifice should be made without hesitation," answered the King. "I am an old experienced salmon, and use not to gulp the angler's hook because it is busked up with a feather called honour. But what is worse than a lack of honour, there were, in returning those ladies to Burgundy, a forfeiture of those views of advantage which moved us to give them an asylum. It were heart-breaking to renounce the opportunity of planting a friend to ourselves, and an enemy to Burgundy, in the very centre of his dominions, and so near to the discontented cities of Flanders. Oliver, I cannot relinquish the advantages which our scheme of marrying the maiden

to a friend of our own house seems to hold out to us."

"Your Majesty," said Oliver, after a moment's thought, "might confer her hand on some right trusty friend, who would take all blame on himself, and serve your Majesty secretly, while in public you might disown him."

"And where am I to find such a friend?" said Louis. "Were I to bestow her upon any one of our mutinous and ill-ruled nobles, would it not be rendering him independent? and hath it not been my policy for years to prevent them from becoming so?—Dunois indeed—him, and him only, I might perchance trust.—He would fight for the crown of France, whatever were his condition. But honours and wealth change men's natures—Even Dunois I will not trust."

"Your Majesty may find others," said Oliver, in his smoothest manner, and in a tone more insinuating than that which he usually employed in conversing with the King, who permitted him considerable freedom; "men dependent entirely on your own grace and favour, and who could no more exist without your countenance than without sun or air—men rather of head than of action—men who——"

"Men who resemble thyself, ha!" said King Louis.—"No, Oliver, by my faith that arrow was rashly shot!—What! because I indulge thee with

my confidence, and let thee, in reward, poll my lieges a little now and then, doest thou think it makes thee fit to be the husband of that beautiful vision, and a Count of the highest class to the boot?—thee—thee, I say, low-born and lower-bred, whose wisdom is at best a sort of cunning, and whose courage is more than doubtful?"

"Your Majesty imputes to me a presumption of which I am not guilty," said Oliver.

"I am glad to hear it, man," replied the King; "and truly, I hold your judgment the healthier that you disown such a reverie. But methinks thy speech sounded strangely in that key.—Well, to return.—I dare not wed this beauty to one of my subjects—I dare not return her to Burgundy—I dare not transmit her to England, or to Germany, where she is likely to become the prize of one more likely to unite with Burgundy than with France, and who would be more ready to discourage the honest malcontents in Ghent and Liege, than to yield them that wholesome countenance which might always find Charles the Hardy enough to exercise his valour on, without stirring from his own domains—and they were in so ripe a humour for insurrection, the men of Liege in especial, that they alone, well heated and supported, would find my fair cousin work for more than a twelvemonth;—and backed by a warlike Count of Croye,—O, Oliver! the plan is too hopeful to be resigned without a

struggle.—Cannot thy fertile brain devise some scheme?"

Oliver paused for a long time—then at last replied, "What if a bridal could be accomplished betwixt Isabelle of Croye, and young Adolphus, the Duke of Gueldres?"

"What!" said the King, in astonishment; "sacrifice her, and she, too, so lovely a creature, to the furious wretch who deposed, imprisoned, and has often threatened to murder, his own father!—No, Oliver, no—that were too unutterably cruel even for you and me, who look so steadfastly to our excellent end, the peace and the welfare of France, and respect so little the means by which it is attained. Besides, he lies distant from us, and is detested by the people of Ghent and Liege.—No, no—I will none of Adolphus of Gueldres—think on some one else."

"My invention is exhausted, sire," said the counsellor; "I can remember no one who, as husband to the Countess of Croye, would be likely to answer your Majesty's views. He must unite such various qualities—a friend to your Majesty—an enemy to Burgundy—of policy enough to conciliate the Gauntois and Liegeois, and of valour sufficient to defend his little dominions against the power of Duke Charles—Of noble birth besides—that your Highness insists upon; and of excellent and most virtuous character, to the boot of all."

"Nay, Oliver," said the King, "I leaned not so much—that is, so *very* much, on character; but methinks Isabelle's bridegroom should be something less publicly and generally abhorred than Adolphus of Gueldres.—For example, since I myself must suggest some one,—why not William de la Marck?"

"On my halidome, sire," said Oliver, "I cannot complain of your demanding too high a standard of moral excellence in the happy man, if the Wild Boar of Ardennes can serve your turn. De la Marck!—why, he is the most notorious robber and murderer on all the frontiers—excommunicated by the Pope for a thousand crimes."

"We will have him relaxed, friend Oliver—Holy Church is merciful."

"Almost an outlaw," continued Oliver, "and under the ban of the Empire, by an ordinance of the Chamber at Ratisbon."

"We will have the ban taken off, friend Oliver," continued the King, in the same tone; "the Imperial Chamber will hear reason."

"And admitting him to be of noble birth," said Oliver, "he hath the manners, the face, and the outward form, as well as the heart, of a Flemish butcher—She will never accept of him."

"His mode of wooing, if I mistake him not," said Louis, "will render it difficult for her to make a choice."

"I was far wrong indeed, when I taxed your Ma-

jesty with being over scrupulous," said the counsellor. "On my life, the crimes of Adolphus are but virtues to those of De la Marck!—And then how is he to meet with his bride?—Your Majesty knows he dare not stir far from his own Forest of Ardennes."

"That must be cared for," said the King; "and, in the first place, the two ladies must be acquainted privately that they can be no longer maintained at this Court, excepting at the expense of a war between France and Burgundy, and that, unwilling to deliver them up to my fair cousin of Burgundy, I am desirous they should secretly depart from my dominions."

"They will demand to be conveyed to England," aid Oliver; "and we will have her return with an island lord, with a round fair face, long brown hair, and three thousand archers at his back."

"No—no," replied the King; "we dare not (you understand me) so far offend our fair cousin of Burgundy as to let her pass to England—It would bring his displeasure as certainly as our maintaining her here. No, no—to the safety of the Church alone we will venture to commit her; and the utmost we can do is to connive at the Ladies Hameline and Isabelle de Croye departing in disguise, and with a small retinue, to take refuge with the Bishop of Liege, who will place the fair Isabelle, for the time, under the safeguard of a convent."

"And if that convent protect her from William de la Marck, when he knows of your Majesty's favourable intentions, I have mistaken the man."

"Why, yes," answered the King, "thanks to our secret supplies of money, De la Marck hath together a handsome handful of as unscrupulous soldiery as ever were outlawed; with which he contrives to maintain himself among the woods, in such a condition as makes him formidable both to the Duke and Bishop of Liege. He lacks nothing but some territory which he may call his own; and this being so fair an opportunity to establish himself by marriage, I think that, *Pasques-dieu!* he will find means to win and wed, without more than a hint on our part. The Duke of Burgundy will then have such a thorn in his side, as no lancet of our time will easily cut out from him. The Boar of Ardennes, whom he has already outlawed, strengthened by the possession of that fair lady's lands, castles, and seigniory, with the discontented Liegeois to boot, who, by my faith, will not be in that case unwilling to choose him for their captain and leader —let him then think of wars with France when he will, or rather let him bless his stars if she war not with him.—How dost like the scheme, Oliver, ha?"

"Rarely," said Oliver, "save and except the doom which confers that lady on the Wild Boar of Ardennes.—By my halidome, saving in a little

outward show of gallantry, Tristan, the Provost-Marshal, were the more proper bridegroom of the two."

"Anon thou didst propose Master Oliver the barber," said Louis; "but friend Oliver and gossip Tristan, excellent men in the way of counsel and execution, are not the stuff that men make Counts of. Know you not that the burghers of Flanders value birth in other men, precisely because they want it themselves?—A plebeian mob ever desire an aristocratic leader. Yonder Ked, or Cade, or—how called they him?—in England, was fain to lure his rascal rout after him, by pretending to the blood of the Mortimers. William de la Marck comes of the blood of the princes of Sedan.—And now to business. I must determine the Ladies of Croye to a speedy and secret flight, under sure guidance. This will be easily done—we have but to hint the alternative of surrendering them to Burgundy. Thou must find means to let William de la Marck know of their motions, and let him choose his own time and place to push his suit. I know a fit person to travel with them."

"May I ask to whom your Majesty commits such an important charge?" asked the tonsor.

"To a foreigner, be sure," replied the King; "one who has neither kin nor interest in France, to interfere with the execution of my pleasure; and who knows too little of the country, and its factions,

to suspect more of my purpose than I choose to tell him—In a word, I design to employ the young Scot who sent you hither but now."

Oliver paused in a manner which seemed to imply a doubt of the prudence of the choice, and then added, "Your Majesty has reposed confidence in that stranger boy earlier than is your wont."

"I have my reasons," answered the King.—"Thou knowest (and he crossed himself) my devotion for the blessed Saint Julian. I had been saying my orisons to that holy Saint late in the night before last, and I made it my humble petition that he would augment my household with such wandering foreigners, as might best establish throughout our kingdom unlimited devotion to our will; and I vowed to the good Saint in guerdon, that I would, in his name, receive, and relieve, and maintain them."

"And did Saint Julian," said Oliver, "send your Majesty this long-legged importation from Scotland in answer to your prayers?"

Although the barber, who well knew that his master had superstition in a large proportion to his want of religion, and that on such topics nothing was more easy than to offend him—although, I say, he knew the royal weakness, and therefore carefully put the preceding question in the softest and most simple tone of voice, Louis felt the inuendo which

it contained, and regarded the speaker with high displeasure.

"Sirrah," he said, "thou art well called Oliver the Devil, who darest thus to sport at once with thy master and with the blessed Saints. I tell thee, wert thou a grain less necessary to me, I would have thee hung up on yonder oak before the Castle, as an example to all who scoff at things holy!—Know, thou infidel slave, that mine eyes were no sooner closed, than the blessed Saint Julian was visible to me, leading a young man, whom he presented to me, saying, that his fortune should be to escape the sword, the cord, the river, and to bring good fortune to the side which he should espouse, and to the adventures in which he should be engaged. I walked out on the succeeding morning, and I met with this youth. In his own country he hath escaped the sword, amid the massacre of his whole family, and here, within the brief compass of two days, he hath been strangely rescued from drowning and from the gallows, and hath already, on a particular occasion, as I but lately hinted to thee, been of the most material service to me. I receive him as sent hither by Saint Julian, to serve me in the most difficult, the most dangerous, and even the most desperate services."

The King, as he thus expressed himself, doffed his hat, and selecting from the numerous little leaden figures with which the hat-band was gar-

nished that which represented Saint Julian, he placed it on the table, as was often his wont when some peculiar feeling of hope, or perhaps of remorse, happened to thrill across his mind, and, kneeling down before it, muttered, with an appearance of profound devotion, "*Sancte Juliane, adsis precibus nostris! Ora, ora, pro nobis!*"

This was one of those ague-fits of superstitious devotion which often seized on Louis in such extraordinary times and places, that they gave one of the most sagacious Monarchs who ever reigned, the appearance of a madman, or at least of one whose mind was shaken by some deep consciousness of guilt.

While he was thus employed, his favourite looked at him with an expression of sarcastic contempt, which he scarce attempted to disguise. Indeed it was one of this man's peculiarities, that, in his whole intercourse with his master, he laid aside that fondling, purring affectation of officiousness and humility, which distinguished his conduct to others; and if he still bore some resemblance to a cat, it was when the animal is on its guard,—watchful, animated, and alert for sudden exertion. The cause of this change was probably Oliver's consciousness, that his master was himself too profound a hypocrite not to see through the hypocrisy of others.

"The features of this youth, then, if I may pre-

sume to speak," said Oliver, "resemble those of him whom your dream exhibited?"

"Closely and intimately," said the King, whose imagination, like that of superstitious people in general, readily imposed upon itself—"I have had his horoscope cast, besides, by Galeotti Martivalle, and I have plainly learned, through his art and mine own observation, that, in many respects, this unfriended youth has his destiny under the same constellation with mine."

Whatever Oliver might think of the causes thus boldly assigned for the preference of an inexperienced stripling, he dared make no farther objections, well knowing that Louis, who, while residing in exile, had bestowed much of his attention on the supposed science of astrology, would listen to no raillery of any kind which impeached his skill. He therefore only replied, that he trusted the youth would prove faithful in the discharge of a task so delicate.

"We will take care he hath no opportunity to be otherwise," said Louis; "for he shall be privy to nothing, save that he is sent to escort the Ladies of Croye to the residence of the Bishop of Liege. Of the probable interference of William de la Marck, he shall know as little as they themselves. None shall know that secret saving the guide; and Tristan or thou must find one fit for our purpose."

"But in that case," said Oliver, "judging of him from his country and his appearance, the young man is like to stand to his arms so soon as the Wild Boar comes on them, and may not come off so easily from the tusks as he did this morning."

"If they rend his heart-strings," said Louis, composedly, "Saint Julian, blessed be his name! can send me another in his stead. It skills as little that the messenger is slain after his duty is executed, as that the flask is broken when the wine is drunk out.—Meanwhile, we must expedite the ladies' departure, and then persuade the Count de Crevecœur that it has taken place without our connivance; we having been desirous to restore them to the custody of our fair cousin, which their sudden departure has unhappily prevented."

"The Count is perhaps too wise, and his master too prejudiced, to believe it."

"Holy Mother!" said Louis, "what unbelief would that be in Christian men! But, Oliver, they *shall* believe us. We will throw into our whole conduct towards our fair cousin, Duke Charles, such thorough and unlimited confidence, that, not to believe we have been sincere with him in every respect, he must be worse than an infidel. I tell thee, so convinced am I that I could make Charles of Burgundy think of me in every respect as I would have him, that, were it necessary for silencing his doubts, I would ride unarmed, and on a palfrey, to

visit him in his tent, with no better guard about me than thine own simple person, friend Oliver."

"And I," said Oliver, "though I pique not myself upon managing steel in any other shape than that of a razor, would rather charge a Swiss battalion of pikes, than I would accompany your Highness upon such a visit of friendship to Charles of Burgundy, when he hath so many grounds to be well assured that there is enmity in your Majesty's bosom against him."

"Thou art a fool, Oliver," said the King—"and that with all thy pretensions to wisdom—and art not aware that deep policy must often assume the appearance of the most extreme simplicity, as courage occasionally shrouds itself under the show of modest timidity. Were it needful, full surely would I do what I have said—the Saints always blessing our purpose, and the heavenly constellations bringing round, in their course, a proper conjuncture for such an exploit."

In these words did King Louis XI. give the first hint of the extraordinary resolution which he afterwards adopted, of duping his great rival, that had very nearly proved his own ruin.

He parted with his counsellor, and presently afterwards went to the apartment of the Ladies of Croye. Few persuasions beyond his mere licence would have been necessary to determine their retreat from the Court of France, upon the first hint

that they might not be eventually protected against the Duke of Burgundy; but it was not so easy to induce them to choose Liege for the place of their retreat. They entreated and requested to be transferred to Bretagne or Calais, where, under protection of the Duke of Bretagne, or King of England, they might remain in a state of safety, until the Sovereign of Burgundy should relent in his rigorous purpose towards them. But neither of these places of safety at all suited the plans of Louis, and he was at last successful in inducing them to adopt that which did coincide with them.

The power of the Bishop of Liege for their defence was not to be questioned, since his ecclesiastical dignity gave him the means of protecting the fugitives against all Christian princes; while, on the other hand, his secular forces, if not numerous, were at least sufficient to defend his person, and all under his protection, from any sudden violence. The difficulty was to reach the little Court of the Bishop in safety; but for this Louis promised to provide, by spreading a report that the Ladies of Croye had escaped from Tours by night, under fear of being delivered up to the Burgundian Envoy, and had taken their flight towards Bretagne. He also promised them the attendance of a small, but faithful retinue, and letters to the commanders of such towns and fortresses as they might pass, with instructions to use every means for protecting and assisting them in their journey.

The Ladies of Croye, although internally resenting the ungenerous and discourteous manner in which Louis thus deprived them of the promised asylum in his Court, were so far from objecting to the hasty departure which he proposed, that they even anticipated his project, by entreating to be permitted to set forward that same night. The Lady Hameline was already tired of a place where there were neither admiring courtiers, nor festivities to be witnessed; and the Lady Isabelle thought she had seen enough to conclude, that were the temptation to become a little stronger, Louis XI., not satisfied with expelling them from his Court, would not hesitate to deliver her up to her irritated Suzerain, the Duke of Burgundy. Lastly, Louis himself readily acquiesced in their hasty departure, anxious to preserve peace with Duke Charles, and alarmed lest the beauty of Isabelle should interfere with and impede the favourite plan which he had formed, for bestowing the hand of his daughter Joan upon his cousin of Orleans.

CHAP. XIII.

THE JOURNEY.

> Talk not of Kings—I scorn the poor comparison;
> I am a SAGE, and can command the elements—
> At least men think I can; and on that thought
> I found unbounded empire.
>
> *Albumazar.*

OCCUPATION and adventure might be said to crowd upon the young Scotchman with the force of a spring-tide; for he was speedily summoned to the apartment of his Captain, the Lord Crawford, where, to his astonishment, he again beheld the King. After a few words respecting the honour and trust which were about to be reposed in him, which made Quentin internally afraid that they were again about to propose to him such a watch as he had kept upon the Count of Crevecœur, or perhaps some duty still more repugnant to his feelings, he was not relieved merely, but delighted, with hearing that he was selected, with the assistance of four others under his command, one of whom was a guide, to escort the Ladies of Croye to the little

Court of their relative, the Bishop of Liege, in the safest and most commodious, and, at the same time, in the most secret manner possible. A scroll was given him, in which were set down directions for his guidance for the places of halt, (generally chosen in villages, monasteries, and places remote from towns,) and for the general precautions which he was to attend to, especially on approaching the frontier of Burgundy. He was sufficiently supplied with instructions what he ought to say and do to sustain the personage of the Maitre d'Hotel of two English ladies of rank, who had been on a pilgrimage to Saint Martin of Tours, and were to visit the holy city of Cologne, and worship the reliques of the sage Eastern Monarchs, who came to adore the nativity of Bethlehem; for under that character the Ladies of Croye were to journey.

Without having any defined notions of the cause of his delight, Quentin Durward's heart leapt for joy at the idea of approaching thus nearly to the person of the Beauty of the Turret, and in a situation which entitled him to her confidence, since her protection was in so great a degree intrusted to his conduct and courage. He felt no doubt in his own mind, that he should be her successful guide through the hazards of her pilgrimage. Youth seldom thinks of dangers, and bred up free, and fearless, and self-confiding, Quentin, in particular, only thought of them to defy them. He longed to be

exempted from the restraint of the Royal presence, that he might indulge the secret glee with which such unexpected tidings filled him, and which prompted him to bursts of delight which would have been totally unfitting for that society.

But Louis had not yet done with him. That cautious Monarch had to consult a counsellor of a different stamp from Oliver le Diable, and who was supposed to derive his skill from the superior and astral intelligences, as men, judging from their fruits, were apt to think the counsels of Oliver sprung from the Devil himself.

Louis therefore led the way, followed by the impatient Quentin, to a separate tower of the Castle of Plessis, in which was installed, in no small ease and splendour, the celebrated astrologer, poet, and philosopher, Galeotti Marti, or Martius, or Martivalle, a native of Narni, in Italy, the author of the famous Treatise, *De Vulgo Incognitis*,* and the subject of his age's admiration, and of the panegyrics of Paulus Jovius. He had long flourished at the Court of the celebrated Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, from whom he was in some measure decoyed by Louis, who grudged the Hungarian Monarch the society and the counsels of a sage, accounted so skilful in reading the decrees of Heaven.

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* Concerning things unknown to the generality of mankind.

Martivalle was none of those ascetic, withered, pale professors of mystic learning, who bleared their eyes over the midnight furnace, and macerated their bodies by outwatching the polar bear. He indulged in all courtly pleasures, and, until he grew corpulent, had excelled in all martial sports and gymnastic exercises, as well as in the use of arms; insomuch, that Janus Pannonius has left a Latin epigram, upon a wrestling match betwixt Galeotti and a renowned champion of that art, in the presence of the Hungarian King and Court, in which the Astrologer was completely victorious.

The apartments of this courtly and martial sage were far more splendidly furnished than any which Quentin had yet seen in the royal palace; and the carving and ornamented wood-work of his library, as well as the magnificence displayed in the tapestries, shewed the elegant taste of the learned Italian. Out of his study one door opened to his sleeping apartment, another led to the turret which served as his observatory. A large oaken table, in the midst of the apartment, was covered with a rich Turkey carpet, the spoils of the tent of a Pacha after the great battle of Jaiza, where the Astrologer had fought abreast with the valiant champion of Christendom, Mathias Corvinus. On the table lay a variety of mathematical and astrological instruments, all of the most rich materials and curious workmanship. His astrolabe of silver was the gift

of the Emperor of Germany, and his Jacob's staff of ebony, jointed with gold, and curiously inlaid, was a mark of esteem from the reigning Pope.

There were various other miscellaneous articles disposed on the table, or hanging around the walls; amongst others, two complete suits of armour, one of mail, the other of plate, both of which, from their great size, seemed to call the gigantic Astrologer their owner; a Spanish toledo, a Scottish broad-sword, a Turkish scymitar, with bows, quivers, and other warlike weapons; musical instruments of several different kinds; a silver crucifix, a sepulchral antique vase, and several of the little brazen Penates of the ancient heathens, with other curious non-descript articles, some of which, in the superstitious opinions of that period, seemed to be designed for magical purposes. The library of this singular character was of the same miscellaneous description with his other effects. Curious manuscripts of classical antiquity lay mingled with the voluminous labours of Christian divines, and of those pains-taking sages who professed the chemical science, and proffered to guide their students into the most secret recesses of nature, by means of the Hermetical Philosophy. Some were written in the eastern character, and others concealed their sense or nonsense under the veil of hieroglyphics and cabalistic characters. The whole apartment, and its furniture of every kind, formed a scene very

impressive on the fancy, considering the general belief then indisputably entertained, concerning the truth of the occult sciences; and that effect was increased by the manners and appearance of the individual himself, who, seated in a huge chair, was employed in curiously examining a specimen, just issued from the Frankfort press, of the newly invented art of printing.

Galeotti Martivalle was a tall, bulky, yet stately man, considerably past his prime, and whose youthful habits of exercise, though still occasionally resumed, had not been able to contend with a natural tendency to corpulence, increased by sedentary study, and indulgence in the pleasures of the table. His features, though rather overgrown, were dignified and noble, and a Santon might have envied the dark and downward sweep of his long-descending beard. His dress was a chamber-robe of the richest Genoa velvet, with ample sleeves, clasped with frogs of gold, and lined with sables. It was fastened round his middle by a broad belt of virgin parchment, round which were represented, in crimson characters, the signs of the Zodiac. He rose and bowed to the King, yet with the air of one to whom such exalted society was familiar, and who was not at all likely to compromise the dignity then especially affected by the pursuers of science.

"You are engaged, father," said the King, "and, as I think, with this new-fashioned art of multiply-

ing manuscripts, by the intervention of machinery. Can things of such mechanical and terrestrial import interest the thoughts of one, before whom Heaven has unrolled her own celestial volumes?"

"My brother," replied Martivalle,—"for so the tenant of this cell must term even the King of France, when he deigns to visit him as a disciple,—believe me that, in considering the consequences of this invention, I read with as certain augury, as by any combination of the heavenly bodies, the most awful and portentous changes. When I reflect with what slow and limited supplies the stream of science hath hitherto descended to us; how difficult to be obtained by those most ardent in its search; how certain to be neglected by all who regard their ease; how liable to be diverted, or altogether dried up, by the invasions of barbarism; can I look forward without wonder and astonishment, to the lot of a succeeding generation, on whom knowledge will descend like the first and second rain, uninterrupted, unabated, unbounded; fertilizing some grounds, and overflowing others; changing the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms——"

"Hold, Galeotti," said Louis,—"shall these changes come in our time?"

"No, my brother," replied Martivalle; "this invention may be likened to a young tree, which is now newly planted, but shall, in succeeding gene-

rations, bear fruit as fatal, yet as precious, as that of the Garden of Eden; the knowledge, namely, of good and evil."

Louis answered, after a moment's pause, "Let futurity look to what concerns them—we are men of this age, and to this age we will confine our care. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.—Tell me, hast thou proceeded farther in the horoscope which I sent to thee, and of which you made me some report? I have brought the party hither, that you may use palmistry, or chiromancy, if such is your pleasure. The matter is pressing."

The bulky Sage arose from his seat, and, approaching the young soldier, fixed on him his keen large dark eyes, as if he were in the act of internally spelling and dissecting every lineament and feature. —Blushing and borne down by this close examination on the part of one whose expression was so reverential at once and commanding, Quentin bent his eyes on the ground, and did not again raise them, till in the act of obeying the sonorous command of the Astrologer, "Look up and be not afraid, but hold forth thy hand."

When Martivalle had inspected his palm, according to the form of the mystic arts which he practised, he led the King some steps aside.—"My royal brother," he said, "the physiognomy of this youth, together with the lines impressed on his hand, confirm, in a wonderful degree, the report which I

founded on his horoscope, as well as that judgment which your own proficiency in our sublime arts induced you at once to form of him. All promises that this youth will be brave and fortunate."

"And faithful?" said the King; "for valour and fortune square not always with fidelity."

"And faithful also," said the Astrologer; "for there is manly firmness in look and eye, and his *linea vitæ* is deeply marked and clear, which indicates a true and upright adherence to those who do benefit or lodge trust in him. But yet——"

"But what?" said the King; "Father Galeotti, wherefore do you now pause?"

"The ears of Kings," said the Sage, "are like the palates of those dainty patients, which are unable to endure the bitterness of the drugs necessary for their recovery."

"My ears and my palate have no such niceness," said Louis; "Let me hear what is useful counsel, and swallow what is wholesome medicine. I quarrel not with the rudeness of the one, or the harsh taste of the other. I have not been cockered in wantonness or indulgence; my youth was one of exile and suffering. My ears are used to harsh counsel, and take no offence at it."

"Then plainly, Sire," replied Galeotti, "if you have aught in your purposed commission, which—which, in short, may startle a scrupulous conscience—intrust it not to this youth—at least, not till a

few years' exercise in your service has made him as unhesitating as others."

"And is this what you hesitated to speak, my good Galeotti? and didst thou think thy speaking it would offend me?" answered the King. "Alack, I know that thou art well sensible, that the path of royal policy cannot be always squared (as that of private life ought invariably to be,) by the abstract maxims of religion, and of morality. Wherefore do we, the Princes of the earth, found churches and monasteries, make pilgrimages, undergo penances, and perform devotions, with which others may dispense, unless it be because the benefit of the public, and the welfare of our kingdoms, force us upon measures which grieve our consciences as Christians? But Heaven has mercy—the Church, an unbounded stock of merits, and the intercession of Our Lady of Embrun, and the blessed saints, is urgent, everlasting, and omnipotent."—He laid his hat on the table, and devoutly kneeling before the images stuck into the hat-band, repeated, in an earnest tone, "*Sancte Huberte, Sancte Juliane, Sancte Martine, Sancta Rosalia, Sancti quotquot adestis, Orate, pro me peccatore!*" He then smote his breast, arose, re-assumed his hat and continued,—"Be assured, good father, that whatever there may be in our commission, of the nature at which you have hinted, the execution shall not be intrusted

to this youth, nor shall he be privy to such part of our purpose."

"In this," said the Astrologer, "you, my royal brother, will walk wisely.—Something may be apprehended likewise from the rashness of this your young commissioner; a failing inherent in those of sanguine complexion. But I hold that, by the rules of art, this chance is not to be weighed against the other properties discovered from his horoscope and otherwise."

"Will this next midnight be a propitious hour in which to commence a perilous journey?" said the King.—"See, here is your Ephemerides—you see the position of the moon in regard to Saturn, and the ascendance of Jupiter—That should argue, methinks, in submission to your better art, success to him who sends forth the expedition at such an hour."

"To him who *sends forth* the expedition," said the Astrologer, after a pause, "this conjunction doth indeed promise success; but, methinks, that Saturn being combust, threatens danger and infortune to the party *sent*; whence I infer that the errand may be perilous, or even fatal, to those who are to journey. Violence and captivity, methinks, are intimated in that adverse conjunction."

"Violence and captivity to those who are sent," answered the King, "but success to the wishes of the sender—Runs it not thus, my learned father?"

"Even so," replied the Astrologer.

The King paused without giving any further indication how far this presaging speech (probably hazarded by the Astrologer from his knowledge that the commission related to some dangerous purpose) squared with his real object, which, as the reader is aware, was to betray the Countess Isabelle of Croye into the hands of William De la Marck, a leader distinguished for his turbulent disposition and ferocious bravery.

The King then pulled forth a paper from his pocket, and, ere he gave it to Martivalle, said, in a tone which resembled that of an apology—"Learned Galeotti, be not surprised, that, possessing in you an oracular treasure, superior to that lodged in the breast of any now alive, not excepting the great Nostradamus himself, I am desirous frequently to avail myself of your skill in those doubts and difficulties, which beset every Prince who hath to contend with rebellion within his land, and with external enemies, both powerful and inveterate."

"When I was honoured with your request, Sire," said the philosopher, "and abandoned the Court of Buda for that of Plessis, it was with the resolution to place at the command of my royal patron whatever my art had, that might be of service to him."

"Enough, good Martivalle—I pray thee attend to the import of this question."—He proceeded to read from the paper in his hand:—"A person ha-

ving on hand a weighty controversy, which is like to draw to debate either by law or by force of arms, is desirous, for the present, to seek accommodation by a personal interview with his antagonist. He desires to know what day will be propitious for the execution of such a purpose; also, what is likely to be the success of such a negotiation, and whether his adversary will be moved to answer the confidence thus reposed in him, with gratitude and kindness, or may rather be likely to abuse the opportunity and advantage which such meeting may afford him?"

"It is an important question," said Martivalle, when the King had done reading, "and requires that I should set a planetary figure, and give it instant and deep consideration."

"Let it be so, my good father in the sciences, and thou shalt know what it is to oblige a King of France. We are determined, if the constellations forbid not,—and our own humble art leads us to think that they approve our purpose,—to hazard something, even in our own person, to stop these anti-Christian wars."

"May the Saints forward your Majesty's pious intent," said the Astrologer, "and guard your sacred person!"

"Thanks, learned father.—Here is something, the while, to enlarge your curious library."

He placed under one of the volumes a small purse

of gold; for, economical even in his superstitions, Louis conceived the Astrologer sufficiently bound to his service by the pensions he had assigned him, and thought himself entitled to the use of his skill at a moderate rate, even upon great exigencies.

Louis, having thus, in legal phrase, added a refreshing fee to his general retainer, turned from him to address Durward.—"Follow me," he said, "my bonny Scot, as one chosen by Destiny and a Monarch to accomplish a bold adventure. All must be got ready, that thou may'st put foot in stirrup the very instant the bell of Saint Martin's tolls twelve. One minute sooner, one minute later, were to forfeit the favourable aspect of the constellations which smile on your adventure."

Thus saying, the King left the apartment, followed by his young guardsman; and no sooner were they gone, than the Astrologer gave way to very different feelings from those which seemed to animate him during the royal presence.

"The niggardly slave!" he said, weighing the purse in his hand,—for, a man of unbounded expense, he had almost constant occasion for money,—"The base sordid scullion!—A coxswain's wife would give more to know that her husband had crossed the narrow seas in safety. *He* acquire any tincture of humane letters!—yes, when prowling foxes and yelling wolves become musicians. *He* read the glorious blazoning of the firmament!—ay,

when sordid moles shall become lynxes.—*Post tot promissa*—after so many promises made, to entice me from the Court of the magnificent Matthias, where Hun and Turk, Christian and Infidel, the Czar of Muscovia and the Cham of Tartary themselves, contended to load me with gifts,—doth he think I am to abide in this old Castle, like a bullfinch in a cage, fain to sing as oft as he chooses to whistle, and all for seed and water?—Not so—*aut inveniam viam, aut faciam*—I will discover or contrive a remedy. The Cardinal Balue is politic and liberal—this query shall to him, and it shall be his Eminence's own fault if the stars speak not as he would have them."

He again took the despised guerdon, and weighed it in his hand. "It may be," he said, "there is some jewel, or pearl of price, concealed in this paltry case—I have heard he can be liberal even to lavishness, when it suits his caprice or interest."

He emptied the purse, which contained neither more nor less than ten gold pieces. The indignation of the Astrologer was extreme.—"Thinks he that for this paltry hire I will practise that celestial science which I have studied with the Armenian Abbot of Istrahoff, who had not seen the sun for forty years,—with the Greek Dubravius, who is said to have raised the dead,—and have even visited the Scheik Eba Hali in his cave in the deserts of Thebais?—No, by heaven!—he that contemns art

shall perish through his own ignorance. Ten pieces! —a pittance which I am half ashamed to offer to Toinette, to buy her new breast-laces."

So saying, the indignant Sage nevertheless plunged the contemned pieces of gold into a large pouch which he wore at his girdle, which Toinette, and other abettors of lavish expense, generally contrived to empty fully faster than the philosopher, with all his art, could find the means of filling it.

CHAP. XIV.

THE JOURNEY.

I see thee yet, fair France—thou favour'd land
Of art and nature—thou art still before me;
Thy sons, to whom their labour is a sport,
So well thy grateful soil returns its tribute;
Thy sun-burnt daughters, with their laughing eyes
And glossy raven-locks. But, favour'd France,
Thou hast had many a tale of woe to tell,
In ancient times as now.

Anonymous.

AVOIDING all conversation with any one, (for such was his charge,) Quentin Durward proceeded hastily to array himself in a strong but plain cuirass, with thigh and arm-pieces, and placed on his head a good steel cap without any visor. To these was added a handsome cassock of shamois leather, finely dressed, and laced down the seams with some embroidery, such as might become a superior officer in a noble household.

These things were brought to his apartment by Oliver, who, with his quiet, insinuating smile and manner, acquainted him that his uncle had been summoned to mount guard, purposely that he might

make no inquiries concerning these mysterious movements.

"Your excuse will be made to your kinsman," said Oliver, smiling again; "and, my dearest son, when you return safe from the execution of this pleasing trust, I doubt not you will be found worthy of such promotion as will dispense with your accounting for your motions to any one, while it will place you at the head of those who must render an account of theirs to you."

So spoke Oliver le Diable, calculating, probably, in his own mind, the great chance there was that the poor youth whose hand he squeezed affectionately as he spoke, must necessarily encounter death or captivity in the commission intrusted to his charge.

At a few minutes before twelve at midnight, Quentin, according to his directions, proceeded to the second court-yard, and paused under the Dauphin's Tower, which, as the reader knows, was assigned for the temporary residence of the Countesses of Croye. He found, at this place of rendezvous, the men and horses appointed to compose the retinue, leading two sumpter mules already loaded with baggage, and holding three palfreys for the two Countesses and a faithful waiting-woman, with a stately war-horse for himself, whose steel-plated saddle glanced in the pale moonlight. Not a word of recognition was spoken on either side.

The men sat still in their saddles, as if they were motionless; and by the same imperfect light Quentin saw with pleasure that they were all armed, and held long lances in their hands. They were only three in number; but one of them whispered to Quentin, in a strong Gascon accent, that their guide was to join them beyond Tours.

Meantime, lights glanced to and fro at the lattices of the tower, as if there was bustle and preparation among its inhabitants. At length, a small door, which led from the bottom of the tower to the court, was unclosed, and three females came forth, attended by a man wrapped in a cloak. They mounted in silence the palfreys which stood prepared for them, while their attendant on foot led the way, and gave the pass-words and signals to the watchful guards, whose posts they passed in succession. Thus they at length reached the exterior of these formidable barriers. Here the man on foot, who had hitherto acted as their guide, paused, and spoke low and earnestly to the two foremost females.

"May heaven bless you, sire," said a voice which thrilled upon Quentin Durward's ear, "and forgive you, even if your purposes be more interested than your words express! To be placed under the protection of the good Bishop of Liege is the utmost extent of my desire."

The person whom she thus addressed, muttered an inaudible answer, and retreated back through

the barrier-gate, while Quentin thought, that, by the moon-glimpse, he recognized in him the King himself, whose anxiety for the departure of his guests had probably induced him to give his presence, in case scruples should arise on their part, or difficulties on that of the guards of the Castle.

When the riders were beyond the Castle, it was necessary for some time to ride with great precaution, in order to avoid the pit-falls, snares, and similar contrivances, which were placed for the annoyance of strangers. The Gascon was, however, completely possessed of the clew to this labyrinth, and in a quarter of an hour's riding, they found themselves beyond the limits of Plessis le Parc, and not far distant from the city of Tours.

The moon, which had now extricated herself from the clouds through which she was formerly wading, shed a full sea of glorious light upon a landscape equally glorious. They saw the princely Loire rolling his majestic tide through the richest plain in France, and sweeping along between banks ornamented with towers and terraces, and with olives and vineyards. They saw the walls of the ancient capital of Touraine raising their portal towers and embattlements white in the moonlight, while, from within their circle, rose the immense Gothic mass which the devotion of the sainted Bishop Perpetuus erected as early as the fifth century, and which the zeal of Charlemagne and his successors had en-

larged with such architectural splendour, as rendered it the most magnificent church in France. The towers of the church of Saint Gatien were also visible, and the gloomy strength of the Castle, which was said to have been, in ancient times, the residence of the Emperor Valentinian.

Even the circumstances in which he was placed, though of a nature so engrossing, did not prevent the wonder and delight with which the young Scotchman, accustomed to the waste though impressive landscape of his own mountains, and the poverty even of his country's most stately scenery, looked on a scene, which art and nature seemed to have vied in adorning with their richest splendour. But he was recalled to the business of the moment by the voice of the elder lady, (pitched at least an octave higher than those soft tones which bid adieu to King Louis,) demanding to speak with the leader of the band. Spurring his horse forward, Quentin reverently presented himself to the ladies in that capacity, and thus underwent the interrogatories of the Lady Hameline.

"What was his name, and what his degree?"

He told both.

"Was he perfectly acquainted with the road?"

"He could not," he replied, "pretend to much knowledge of the route, but he was furnished with full instructions, and he was, at their first resting-place, to be provided with a guide, in all respects

competent to the task of directing their farther journey; meanwhile, a horseman who had just joined them, and made the number of their guard four, was to be their guide for the first stage."

"And wherefore were you selected for such a duty, young gentleman?" said the lady—"I am told you are the same youth who was lately upon guard in the gallery in which we met the Princess of France. You seem young and inexperienced for such a charge—a stranger, too, in France, and speaking the language as a foreigner."

"I am bound to obey the commands of the King, madam, but not to reason on them," answered the young soldier.

"Are you of noble birth?" demanded the same querist.

"I may safely affirm so, madam," replied Quentin.

"And are you not," said the younger lady, addressing him in her turn, but with a timorous accent, "the same whom I saw when I was called to wait upon the King at yonder inn?"

Lowering his voice, perhaps from similar feelings of timidity, Quentin answered in the affirmative.

"Then, methinks, my cousin," said the Lady Isabelle, addressing the Lady Hameline, "we must be safe under this young gentleman's safeguard; he looks not, at least, like one to whom the

execution of a plan of treacherous cruelty upon two helpless women could be with safety intrusted."

"On my honour, madam," said Durward, "by the fame of my House, by the bones of my ancestry, I could not, for France and Scotland laid into one, be guilty of treachery or cruelty towards you!"

"You speak well, young man," said the Lady Hameline; "but we are accustomed to hear fair speeches from the King of France and his agents. It was by these that we were induced, when the protection of the Bishop of Liege might have been attained with less risk than now, or when we might have thrown ourselves on that of Winceslaus of Germany, or of Edward of England, to seek refuge in France. And in what did the promises of the King result? In an obscure and shameful concealing of us, under plebeian names, as a sort of prohibited wares, in yonder paltry hostelry, when we, —who, as thou knowest, Marthon, (addressing her domestic,) never put on our head-tire save under a canopy, and upon a dais of three degrees,—were compelled to attire ourselves, standing on the simple floor, as if we had been two milk-maids."

Marthon admitted that her lady spoke a most melancholy truth.

"I would that had been the sorest evil, dear kinswoman," said the Lady Isabelle; "I could gladly have dispensed with state."

"But not with society," said the other Countess; "that, my sweet cousin, was impossible."

"I would have dispensed with all, my dearest kinswoman," answered Isabelle, in a voice which penetrated to the very heart of her young conductor and guard, "with all, for a safe and honourable retirement. I wish not—God knows, I never wished—to occasion war betwixt France and my native Burgundy, or that lives should be lost for such as I. I only implored permission to retire to the Convent of Marmoutier, or to any other holy sanctuary."

"You spoke then like a fool, my cousin," answered the elder lady, "and not like a daughter of my noble brother. It is well there is still one alive, who hath some of the spirit of the noble House of Croye. How should a high-born lady be known from a sunburnt milk-maid, save that spears are broken for the one, and only hazel-poles for the other? I tell you, maiden, that while I was in the very earliest bloom, scarcely older than yourself, the famous Passage of Arms at Haflinghem was held in my honour; the challengers were four, the assailants so many as twelve. It lasted three days; and cost the lives of two adventurous knights, the fracture of one back-bone, one collar-bone, three legs and two arms, besides flesh-wounds and bruises beyond the heralds' counting; and thus have the ladies of our House ever been honoured. Ah! had you but half

the heart of your noble ancestry, you would find means at some Court, where ladies' love and fame in arms are still prized, to maintain a tournament, at which your hand should be the prize, as was that of your great-grandmother of blessed memory, at the spear-running of Strasbourg; and thus should you gain the best lance in Europe, to maintain the rights of the House of Croye, both against the oppression of Burgundy and the policy of France."

"But, fair kinswoman," answered the younger Countess, "I have been told by my old nurse, that although the Rhinegrave was the best lance at the great tournament at Strasbourg, and so won the hand of my respected ancestor, yet the match was no happy one, as he used often to scold, and sometimes to beat, my great-grandmother of blessed memory."

"And wherefore not?" said the elder Countess, in her romantic enthusiasm for the profession of chivalry; "why should those victorious arms, accustomed to blows abroad, be bound to restrain their energies at home? A thousand times rather would I be beaten twice a-day, by a husband whose arm was as much feared by others as by me, than be the wife of a coward, who dared neither to lift hand to his wife, nor to any one else!"

"I should wish you joy of such a restless mate, fair aunt," replied Isabelle, "without envying you;

for if broken bones be lovely in tourneys, there is nothing less amiable in ladies' bower."

"Nay, but the beating is no necessary consequence of wedding with a knight of fame in arms; though it is true that our ancestor of blessed memory, the Rhingrave Gottfried, was something rough-tempered, and addicted to the use of Rheinwein.—The very perfect knight is a lamb among ladies, and a lion among lances. There was Thibault of Montigni—God be with him!—he was the kindest soul alive, and not only was he never so discourteous as to lift hand against his lady, but, by our good dame, he who beat all enemies without doors, found a fair foe who could belabour him within.—Well, 'twas his own fault—he was one of the challengers at the Passage of Haflinghem, and so well bestirred himself, that, if it had pleased Heaven, and your grandfather, there might have been a lady of Montigni, who had used his gentle nature more gently."

The Countess Isabelle, who had some reason to dread this Passage of Haflinghem, it being a topic upon which her aunt was at all times very diffuse, suffered the conversation to drop; and Quentin, with the natural politeness of one who had been gently nurtured, dreading lest his presence might be a restraint on their conversation, rode forward to join the guide, as if to ask him some questions concerning their route.

Meanwhile, the ladies continued their journey in silence, or in such conversation as is not worth narrating, until day began to break; and as they had then been on horseback for several hours, Quentin, anxious lest they should be fatigued, became impatient to know their distance from the nearest resting-place.

"I will shew it you," answered the guide, "in half an hour."

"And then you leave us to other guidance?" continued Quentin.

"Even so, Seignior Archer," replied the man; "my journeys are always short and straight.—When you and others, Seignior Archer, go by the bow, I always go by the cord."

The moon had by this time long decayed, and the lights of dawn were beginning to spread bright and strong in the east, and to gleam on the bosom of a small lake, on the verge of which they had been riding for a short space of time. This lake lay in the midst of a wide plain, scattered over with single trees, groves, and thickets; but which might be yet termed open, so that objects began to be discerned with sufficient accuracy. Quentin cast his eye on the person whom he rode beside, and, under the shadow of a slouched overspreading hat, which resembled the sombrero of a Spanish peasant, he recognized the facetious features of the same Petit-André, whose fingers, not long since, had, in con-

cert with those of his lugubrious brother, Trois-Eschelles, been so unpleasantly active about his throat.—Impelled by aversion, not altogether unmixed with fear, (for in his own country the executioner is regarded with almost superstitious horror,) which his late narrow escape had not diminished, Durward instinctively moved his horse's head to the right, and pressing him at the same time with the spur, made a demi-volte, which separated him eight feet from his hateful companion.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" exclaimed Petit-André; "by our Lady of the Gréve, our young soldier remembers us of old.—What! comrade, you bear no malice, I trust?—every one wins his bread in this country. No man need be ashamed of having come through my hands, for I will do my work with any that ever tied a living weight to a dead tree.—And God hath given me grace to be such a merry fellow withal—Ha! ha! ha!—I could tell you such jests I have cracked between the foot of the ladder and the top of the gallows, that, by my halidome, I have been obliged to do my job rather hastily, for fear the fellows should die with laughing, and so shame my mystery!"

As he thus spoke, he edged his horse sideways, to regain the interval which the Scot had left between them, saying at the same time, "Come, Seignior Archer, let there be no unkindness be-

twixt us!—For my part, I always do my duty without malice, and with a light heart, and I never love a man better than when I have put my scant-of-wind collar about his neck, to dub him Knight of the Order of Saint Patibularius, as the Provost's Chaplain, the worthy Father Vaconeldiablo, is wont to call the Patron Saint of the Provostry."

"Keep back, thou wretched object!" exclaimed Quentin, as the finisher of the law again sought to approach him closer, "or I will be tempted to teach you the distance that should be betwixt men of honour, and such an outcast."

"La you there, how hot you are!" said the fellow; "had you said men of *honesty*, there had been some savour of truth in it;—but for men of *honour*, good lack, I have to deal with them every day, as nearly and closely as I was about to do business with you.—But peace be with you, and keep your company to yourself. I would have bestowed a flagon of Auvernât upon you to wash away every unkindness—but you scorn my courtesy.—Well. Be as churlish as you list—I never quarrel with my customers—my jerry-come-tumbles, my merry dancers, my little play-fellows, as Jacques Butcher says to his lambs—those in fine, who, like your seigniorship, have H. E. M. P. written on their foreheads—No, no, let them use me as they list, they shall have my good service at last—and yourself shall see, when you next come

under Petit-André's hands, that he knows how to forgive an injury."

So saying, and summing up the whole with a provoking wink, and such an interjectional *tchick* as men quicken a dull horse with, Petit-André drew off to the other side of the path, and left the youth to digest the taunts he had treated him with, as his proud Scotch stomach best might. A strong desire had Quentin to have belaboured him while the staff of his lance could hold together; but he put a restraint on his passion, recollecting that a brawl with such a character could be creditable at no time or place, and that a quarrel of any kind, on the present occasion, would be a breach of duty, and might involve the most perilous consequences. He therefore swallowed his wrath at the ill-timed and professional jokes of Mons. Petit-André, and contented himself with devoutly hoping that they had not reached the ears of his fair charge, on which they could not be supposed to make an impression in favour of himself, as one obnoxious to such sarcasms. But he was speedily roused from such thoughts by the cry of both the ladies at once, "Look back—look back!—For the love of Heaven look to yourself, and us—we are pursued!"

Quentin hastily looked back, and saw that two armed men were in fact following them, and riding at such a pace as must soon bring them up with their party. "It can," he said, "be only some of

the Provostry making their rounds in the Forest. —Do thou look," he said to Petit-André, " and see what they may be."

Petit-André obeyed; and rolling himself jocosely in the saddle after he had made his observations, replied, " These, fair sir, are neither your comrades nor mine—neither Archers nor Marshalmen—for I think they wear helmets, with visors lowered, and gorgets of the same.—A plague upon these gorgets, of all other pieces of armour!—I have fumbled with them an hour before I could undo the rivets."

" Do you, gracious ladies," said Durward, without attending to Petit-André, " ride forward—not so fast as to raise an opinion of your being in flight, and yet fast enough to avail yourself of the impediment which I shall presently place between you and these men who follow us."

The Countess Isabelle looked to their guide, and then whispered her aunt, who spoke to Quentin thus—" We have confidence in your care, fair Archer, and will rather abide the risk of whatever may chance in your company, than we will go onward with that man, whose mien is, we think, of no good augury."

" Be it as you will, ladies," said the youth— " There are but two who come after us; and though they be knights, as their arms seem to shew, they shall, if they have any evil purpose, learn how a

Scotchman can do his devoir in the presence and defence of such as you are.—Which of you there," he continued, addressing the guards whom he commanded, "is willing to be my comrade, and to break a lance with these gallants?"

Two of the men obviously faltered in resolution; but the third, Bertrand Guyot, swore, "that, *cap de diou*, were they Knights of King Arthur's Round Table, he would try their mettle, for the honour of Gascony."

While he spoke, the two knights, for they seemed of no less rank, came up with the rear of the party, in which Quentin, with his sturdy adherent, had by this time stationed himself. They were fully accoutred in excellent armour of polished steel, without any device by which they could be distinguished.

One of them, as they approached, called out to Quentin, "Sir Squire, give place—we come to relieve you of a charge which is above your rank and condition. You will do well to leave these ladies in our care, who are fitter to wait upon them, especially as we know that in yours they are little better than captives."

"In return to your demand, sirs," replied Durward, "know, in the first place, that I am discharging the duty imposed upon me by my present Sovereign; and next, that however unworthy I may be, the ladies desire to abide under my protection."

"Out, sirrah!" exclaimed one of the champions; "will you, a wandering beggar, put yourself on terms of resistance against belted knights?"

"They are indeed terms of resistance," said Quentin, "since they oppose your insolent and unlawful aggression; and if there be difference of rank between us, which as yet I know not, your discourtesy has done it away. Draw your sword, or, if you will use the lance, take ground for your career."

While the knights turned their horses, and rode back to the distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, Quentin, looking to the ladies, bent low on his saddle-bow, as if desiring their favourable regard, and as they streamed towards him their kerchiefs, in token of encouragement, the two assailants had gained the distance necessary for their charge.

Calling to the Gascon to bear himself like a man, Durward put his steed into motion; and the four horsemen met in full career in the midst of the ground which at first separated them. The shock was fatal to the poor Gascon; for his adversary, aiming at his face, which was undefended by a visor, ran him through the eye into the brain, so that he fell dead from his horse.

On the other hand, Quentin, though labouring under the same disadvantage, swayed himself in the saddle so dexterously, that the hostile lance,

slightly scratching his cheek, passed over his right shoulder; while his own spear, striking his antagonist fair upon the breast, hurled him to the ground. Quentin jumped off, to unhelm his fallen opponent; but the other knight, (who, by the way, had never yet spoken,) seeing the fortune of his companion, dismounted still more speedily than Durward, and bestriding his friend, who lay senseless, exclaimed, "In the name of God and Saint Martin, mount, good fellow, and get thee gone with thy woman's ware!—Ventre Saint Gris, they have caused mischief enough this morning."

"By your leave, Sir Knight," said Quentin, who could not brook the menacing tone in which this advice was given, "I will first see whom I have had to do with, and learn who is to answer for the death of my comrade."

"That shalt thou never live to know or to tell," answered the Knight. "Get thee back in peace, good fellow. If we were fools for interrupting your passage, we have had the worse, for thou hast done more evil than the lives of thou and thy whole band could repay.—Nay, if thou *wilt* have it, (for Quentin now drew his sword, and advanced on him,) take it with a vengeance!"

So saying, he dealt the Scot such a blow on the helmet, as, till that moment, (though bred where good blows were plenty,) he had only read of in romance. It descended like a thunderbolt, beating

down the guard which the young soldier had raised to protect his head, and, reaching his helmet of proof, cut it through so far as to touch his hair, but without farther injury; while Durward, dizzy, stunned, and beaten down on one knee, was for an instant at the mercy of the knight, had it pleased him to second his blow. But compassion for Quentin's youth, or admiration of his courage, or a generous love of fair play, made him withhold from taking such advantage; while Quentin, collecting himself, sprung up and attacked his antagonist with the energy of one determined to conquer or die, and at the same time with the presence of mind necessary for fighting the quarrel out to the best advantage. Resolved not again to expose himself to such dreadful blows as he had just sustained, he employed the advantage of superior agility, increased by the comparative lightness of his armour, to harass his antagonist, by traversing on all sides, with a suddenness of motion and rapidity of attack, against which the knight, in his heavy panoply, found it difficult to defend himself without much fatigue.

It was in vain that this generous antagonist called aloud to Quentin, "that there now remained no cause of fight betwixt them, and that he was loath to be constrained to do him injury." Listening only to the suggestions of a passionate wish to redeem the shame of his temporary defeat, Durward continued to assail him with the rapidity of lightning

—now menacing him with the edge, now with the point of his sword—and ever keeping such an eye on the motions of his opponent, of whose superior strength he had had terrible proof, that he was ready to spring backward, or aside, from under the blows of his tremendous weapon.

"Now the devil be with thee for an obstinate and presumptuous fool," muttered the knight, "that cannot be quiet till thou art knocked on the head!" So saying, he changed his mode of fighting, collected himself as if to stand on the defensive, and seemed contented with parrying, instead of returning, the blows which Quentin unceasingly aimed at him, with the internal resolution, that the instant when either loss of breath, or any false or careless pass of the young soldier, should give an opening, he would put an end to the fight by a single blow. It is likely he might have succeeded in this artful policy, but Fate had ordered it otherwise.

The duel was still at the hottest, when a large party of horse rode up, crying, "Hold, in the King's name!" Both champions stepped back—and Quentin saw, with surprise, that his Captain, Lord Crawford, was at the head of the party who had thus interrupted their combat. There was also Tristan l'Hermite, with two or three of his followers; making, in all, perhaps twenty horse.

END OF VOLUME SIXTH.

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